

AREOPAGITICA

November, 1644

PREFACE AND NOTES BY ERNEST SIRLUCK

THE *Areopagitica*, although it bears Milton's name on the title page, was unlicensed, unregistered, and issued without imprint of publisher or printer (who remain unknown). The unknown recipient of the presentation copy now in the Yale Library, the title page of which is here reproduced, added "nov: 23" to the imprint "*LONDON*, Printed in the Yeare, 1644." Thomason dated his presentation copy a day later. Two other presentation copies are known, one to John Rous for the Bodleian, where it remains, and one to Patrick Young, now in the library of Trinity College, Dublin; but each formed part of a presentation collection and neither is separately dated. A. Geffroy (*Étude sur les Pamphlets Politiques et Religieux de Milton* [Paris, 1848], p. 232) asserted that the original manuscript was in the British Museum; no one has been able to find it.

There was no further edition during Milton's lifetime, nor (except in the collected editions of Milton's prose in 1697 and 1698¹) during the remainder of the seventeenth century, although several more or less extensive, if unacknowledged, adaptations were published during the latter part of the century at moments when censorship was in agitation.² The first separate republication (with a preface by the poet James Thomson) was in 1738, when it was widely feared that the renewal of stage licensing would soon be followed by renewed licensing of the press. *Areopagitica* has since become the most frequently republished of Milton's prose works. The most important annotated editions are those of:

T. Holt White (London, 1819). Gives bibliographical history prior to 1819. First systematically annotated edition, containing many useful explications adopted by subsequent editors. Reprints the adaptation by Mirabeau (see below).

¹ See *Complete Prose*, I, vii.

² See T. Holt White, *Areopagitica* (London, 1819), introduction, pp. lvii and cxxi; Macaulay, *History of England*, Book III, chapter 19 (Everyman ed., London, 1906, III, 186–88); and George F. Sensabaugh, *That Grand Whig Milton* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1952), pp. 55–61 and 155–62.

J. A. St. John, in the *Bohn Prose Works* (London, 1848). Inaccurate text, sporadic and uneven annotations. Has had a serious corrupting influence upon the text (many popular editions still repeat the errors it introduced).

Edward Arber, in *English Reprints* (London, 1868). Few notes, but almost completely accurate literal text, and contains *A Decree of Starre-Chamber, Concerning Printing* (1637), the House of Commons Orders of January 29, 1642, and March 9, 1643, and *An Order of the Lords and Commons . . . for the Regulating of Printing . . . 14 June 1643* (see above, introduction, pp. 158–61, for an account of these documents).

Sir Richard Jebb, whose *Commentary*, privately printed in 1872, was reprinted with the text and supplementary material by A. W. Verity (Cambridge, 1918); several reprints (to 1940).

John W. Hales (Oxford, 1874). Reissued several times, with minor revisions, to 1939. Very full and informative notes on classical and biblical background; with respect to the seventeenth century it has been in part outmoded by more recent scholarship.

Laura E. Lockwood, in *Of Education, Areopagitica, The Commonwealth* (New York, 1911).

Merritt Y. Hughes, in *John Milton: Prose Selections* (New York: Odyssey Press, 1947); notes revised and amplified in *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose* (New York: Odyssey Press, 1957).

A facsimile reproduction of the first edition was published simultaneously in *The Noel Douglas Replicas* (London, 1927) and *The English Replicas* (New York, 1927). The *Columbia Works* presents a critical text, but finds no variants.

Areopagitica has been several times translated into French and German; there are complete translations in Russian, Italian, and Spanish, and partial ones in Dutch and classical Greek. The most dramatic foreign rendering is less a translation than an adaptation: Mirabeau's *Tract sur la Liberté de la Presse, imité de l'Anglois de Milton* ("Londres" [*i.e.*, Paris?], 1788 and 1789; second edition, Paris, 1792). The most scholarly foreign edition is the translation, with introduction and notes, by Olivier Lutaud (Paris: Aubier, 1956). A paraphrase into nineteenth-century English, with explanatory annotations, was published by Samuel Lobb (Calcutta, 1872).

The context in which Milton wrote *Areopagitica*, together with its organization, method, and success, has been discussed at some length in the introduction (see above, pp. 53–136 and 158–81).

The present text is based upon the Thomason copy, British Museum C55c22(9), referred to in the textual notes (below, p. 778) as "A."

It is a quarto measuring 18.6 x 14.6 cm.³ Collation: A-E⁴F². Contents: A1, title-page; A2-F1v text; F2 blank. A2 [row of 16 ornaments, an Irish harp surmounted by a crown] head-title: "For the Liberty of un-licenc'd Printing." F1v, "*The End.*"/[margin-to-margin rule]. The blank leaf F2 is often missing. Signatures are normal; pagination 1-40. A2 is page 1, and pagination is continuous without error. "A" has been collated with these other copies of the first edition: "B" (the Rous presentation copy), Bodleian Arch. G.e.44; "C" (the Yale presentation copy), Yale University Library Ij.M642.C641.v.3; "D," British Museum C120. b12(1); "E," British Museum G608; "F," Bodleian Wood. B.29; "G," Bodleian C.14.5.Linc.; "H," Union Theological Seminary, McAlpin Cat., II, 301; "I," New York Public *KC 1644 Milton. In addition, the Librarian of Trinity College, Dublin, has generously examined the Young presentation copy for the manuscript corrections described in the textual notes.

Gathering A exists in two states. The earlier is represented by copy "A," which contains a superfluous and reversed oblique at p. 1, l. 5 (below, p. 468, l. 7), and has "unboekish" at p. 5, l. 29 (below, p. 496, l. 8). The second state, which includes all other copies examined, deletes the obtruding mark and corrects to "unbookish." Since p. 1 is A2r and p. 5 is A4r, it will be seen that only the inner forme underwent correction; the outer forme contains an uncorrected repeated word at p. 4, l. 34 (below, p. 493, l. 12).

Gathering B probably has only one state, the difference between copies at p. 8, l. 21 (below, p. 503, l. 18) being almost certainly due to the gradual deterioration of a faulty character.

Gathering C shows two variations, but it is doubtful whether either involved resetting. That at p. 17, l. 5 (below, p. 526, l. 5) is probably due to deterioration, and that at p. 19, l. 4 (below, p. 778, l. 1) to a turned colon printing like a period after some impressions had been taken.

Gathering D has only one state.

Gathering E exists in two states. The earlier is represented by copies "A," "C," and "D," which have "*treasuves*" at p. 36, l. 4 (below, p. 562, l. 7). The second state, represented by "B," "E," "F," "G," "H," and "I," corrects to "*treasures.*" P. 36 is E3v, thus belonging to the inner forme. The outer forme has three uncorrected errors: at p. 34, l. 15 (below, p. 559, l. 3), p. 38, ll. 16-17 (below, p. 567, l. 3), and p. 38, l. 27 (below, p. 567, l. 14). Gathering F exists in two states. The earlier is represented by copy "A," which has "fore judge" at p. 39, ll. 1-2 (below,

³ Copies have been variously trimmed; the largest encountered ("D"), which may be fairly close to the original size, is 19.2 x 14.6 cm.

p. 567, l. 26). The second state, which includes all other copies examined, corrects to "fore-judge" (line-end hyphen). An error four lines down (below, p. 568, l. 4) remains uncorrected.

None of these press corrections suggests the intervention of the author; rather, the unsystematic nature of the corrections suggests his absence from the press, and so makes it more probable that the correction noted below, p. 515, n. 102, represents his belated intervention.

ERNEST SIRLUCK

University of Chicago

AREOPAGITICA;

A

SPEECH

OF

Mr. JOHN MILTON

For the Liberty of UNLICENC'D
PRINTING,

To the PARLAMENT of ENGLAND.

Τὸ δὲ θεῶν δ' ἐκείνων, αἱ περὶ αὐτῶν πόλιν
Χρηστὴν πὺ βέλδ' μ' εἰς μέσον φέρειν, ἔχων.
Καὶ ταῦθ' ὁ χρῆζων, λαμπερὸς ἔσθ', ὅ μὴ θέλων,
Σιγῇ, πὶ γέτων ἴσθ' ἰσχυρὸν πόλιν;
Euripid, Hicetid.

*This is true Liberty when free born men
Having to advise the public may speak free,
Which he who can, and will, deserv's high praise,
Who neither can nor will, may hold his peace;
What can be juster in a State then this?*

Euripid. Hicetid.

Ex Dono Auctoris

no. 23

LONDON,
Printed in the Yeare, 1644.

For the Liberty of unlicenc'd Printing.

THEY who to States³ and Governours of the Commonwealth direct their Speech, High Court of Parliament, or wanting such accesse in a private condition, write that which they foresee may advance the publick good; I suppose them as at the beginning of no meane endeavour, not a little alter'd and mov'd inwardly in their mindes: Some with doubt of what will be the successe, others with feare of what will be the censure; some with hope, others with confidence of what they have to speake. And me perhaps each of these dispositions, as the subject was whereon I enter'd, may have at other times⁴ variously affected; and likely might in these

¹ Title page, first line, *Areopagitica*. The Seventh Oration of Isocrates, usually called the *Areopagitic Discourse* or *Areopagiticus*, was written *ca.* 355 B.C. (R. C. Jebb, *The Attic Orators* [2 vols., London, 1893], II, 203–206). Isocrates (436–338 B.C.) conducted a famous school of rhetoric at Athens. Physical and nervous weakness prevented him from speaking in public; hence he composed his “orations” to be read. His greatest interest was political, but his only real influence was stylistic. The parallel of the *Areopagitic Discourse* with the *Areopagitica* lies chiefly in the form (a “speech” designed to be read, not spoken) and situation (a private citizen urging a change of policy in a discourse to what Milton calls “the Parliament of Athens”; below, p. 489, n. 12). In purpose, Isocrates differs so strikingly from Milton that the latter’s choice of title is rather curious. In the fourth century B.C. the Court of the Areopagus retained only such of its former powers as served to make it a criminal court of very limited jurisdiction; Isocrates urges the restoration to it of those functions which had once made it a dominant political power, especially the control of education and the general censorship of manners (Jebb, II, 206–14). It is just possible that Milton intended that his title call to the reader’s mind another “Areopagitic discourse” (to which he refers elsewhere in the *Areopagitica*; see below, nn. 75 and 76): that of Paul, reported in Acts 17:18–34. Some connection may be seen between Milton’s idea of the nature of truth and his attack on compulsory religious conformity, and the words of Paul: “Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. . . . Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.”

² Title page, l. 19, *Euripid. Hicetid.*: Euripides, *The Suppliants*.

³ Heads of state.

⁴ Of the seven prose works that had preceded the *Areopagitica*, only the revised edition of *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1644) and *The Judgment of Martin Bucer* (1644) had been formally addressed to Parliament; all of them, of course, had been written with Parliament in mind.

formost expressions now also disclose which of them sway'd most, but that the very attempt of this addresse thus made, and the thought of whom it hath recourse to, hath got the power within me to a passion, farre more welcome then incidentall to a Preface. Which though I stay not to confesse ere any aske, I shall be blamelesse, if it be no other, then the joy and gratulation which it ⁵ brings to all who wish and promote their Countries liberty; whereof this whole Discourse propos'd will be a certaine testimony, if not a Trophy. For this is not the liberty which wee can hope, that no grievance ever should arise in the Commonwealth, that let no man in this World expect; but when complaints are freely heard, deeply consider'd, and speedily reform'd, then is the utmost bound of civill liberty attain'd, that wise men looke for. To which if I now manifest by the very sound of this which I shall utter, that wee are already in good part arriv'd, and yet from such a steepe disadvantage of tyranny and superstition grounded into our principles as was beyond the manhood of a *Roman* recovery, it will bee attributed first, as is most due, to the strong assistance of God our deliverer, next to your faithfull guidance and undaunted Wisdome, Lords and Commons of *England*. Neither is it in Gods esteeme the diminution of his glory, when honourable things are spoken of good men and worthy Magistrates; which if I now first should begin to [1] doe,⁶ after so fair a progresse of your laudable deeds, and such a long obligation ⁷ upon the whole Realme to your indefatigable vertues, I might be justly reckn'd among the tardiest, and the unwillingest of them that praise yee. Neverthelesse there being three principall things, without which all praising is but Courtship and flattery, First, when that only is prais'd which is solidly worth praise: next when greatest likelihoods are brought that such things are truly and really in those persons to whom they are ascrib'd, the other, when he who praises, by shewing that such his actuall perswasion is of whom he writes, can demonstrate that he flatters not; the former two of these I have heretofore endeavour'd, rescuing the employ-

⁵ it: The antecedent is "the very attempt of this addresse thus made."

⁶ The most striking instance of Milton's earlier praise of the Long Parliament is in *An Apology* (*Complete Prose*, I, 922-28). In comparison with this panegyric, the praise contained in the address to Parliament prefixed to the second edition of *Doctrine and Discipline* (above, pp. 224-26) is relatively cautious.

⁷ The Long Parliament met November 3, 1640, four years before *Areopagitica*. See *Complete Prose*, I, 56-59.

ment from him who went about to impaire your merits with a triviall and malignant *Encomium*; ⁸ the latter as belonging chiefly to mine owne acquittall, that whom I so extoll'd I did not flatter, hath been reserv'd opportunely to this occasion. For he who freely magnifies what hath been nobly done, and fears not to declare as freely what might be done better, gives ye the best cov'nant of his fidelity; and that his loyalest affection and his hope waits on your proceedings. His highest praising is not flattery, and his plainest advice is a kinde of praising; for though I should affirme and hold by argument, that it would fare better with truth, with learning, and the Commonwealth, if one of your publisht Orders which I should name, were call'd in, yet at the same time it could not but much redound to the lustre of your milde and equall Government, when as private persons are hereby animated to thinke ye better pleas'd with publick advice, then other statistes have been delighted heretofore with publicke flattery.⁹ And men will then see what difference there is between the magnanimity of a trienniall Parliament,¹⁰ and

⁸ Joseph Hall, bishop of Norwich, 1574–1656; see *Complete Prose*, I, 28–33. Hall's *Humble Remonstrance to the High Court of Parliament* (1641) precipitated the Smectymnuan controversy, to which Milton contributed *Animadversions* (1641) and *Apology against a Pamphlet* (1642). In the latter Milton attacks a passage in Hall's *Modest Confutation of a Slandorous and Scurrilous Libel* (1642) as revealing royalist sympathy even while pretending to praise the Parliament (*Complete Prose*, I, 919–20). After this analysis he writes (p. 922), "to testifie the gratitude which I owe to those publick benefactors of their country . . . I shall be so troublesome to this declamer for once, as to shew him what he might have better said in their praise," and then fills several pages with the better praise. "Malignant" was a stock term by which the Parliamentary party designated its opponents.

⁹ Cf. Herbert Palmer, who, in urging speedier reformation in a sermon to the House of Commons (*The Necessity and Encouragement of Utmost Venturing*, June 21, 1643; E60[3], p. 49), said: "We have long, and too justly complained of *Princes being flattered*, by them that least should, and how much we and they have been *undone* by it. Let it, I beseech you, be *your glory* (and God will make it so) that *you had rather be twice admonisht*, even without cause, then *to want it once*, when there is just cause." An important difference from Milton, however, was that a clergyman was thought to have a duty to admonish his hearers.

¹⁰ The Triennial Parliaments Act (February 16, 1641) provided for the automatic issue of writs for a new Parliament if the king failed to summon one within three years of the dissolution of the last. Milton seems to suggest that Parliament, thus secured against a long intermission, has become more magnanimous than when it could meet only at the king's pleasure. He does not mention an Act of vastly greater consequence to the power of the Long Parliament: that of May 10, 1641, providing against its dissolution except by its own consent.

that jealous hautinesse of Prelates and cabin Counsellours that usurpt of late, when as they shall observe yee in the midd'st of your Victories and successes¹¹ more gently brooking writt'n exceptions against a voted Order, then other Courts, which had produc't nothing worth memory but the weake ostentation of wealth, would have endur'd the least signifi'd dislike at any sudden Proclamation. If I should thus farre presume upon the meek demeanour of your civill and gentle greatnesse, Lords and Commons, as what your publisht Order hath directly said, that to gainsay, I might defend my selfe with ease, if any should accuse me of being new or insolent, did they but know how much better I find ye esteem it to imitate the old and elegant humanity of Greece, [2] then the barbarick pride of a *Hunnish* and *Norwegian* statelines. And out of those ages, to whose polite wisdom and letters we ow that we are not yet *Gothes* and *Jutlanders*, I could name him who from his private house wrote that discourse to the Parlament of *Athens*,¹² that perswades them to change the forme of *Democracy* which was then establisht. Such honour was done in those dayes to men who profest the study of wisdome and eloquence, not only in their own Country, but in other Lands, that Cities and Siniories heard them gladly, and with great respect, if they had ought in publick to admonish the State. Thus did *Dion Prusaesus*¹³ a stranger and a privat Orator counsell the *Rhodians* against a former Edict: and I abound with other like examples, which to set heer would be superfluous. But if from the industry of a life wholly dedicated to studi-

¹¹ Milton is being tactful; "in the midd'st of your Victories and successes" would have been a much more accurate description of Parliament's situation in July than in the autumn and early winter. See above, introduction, pp. 54-55.

¹² him: Isocrates; see above, p. 486, n. 1. "The Parlament of Athens" is not a reference to the Court of the Areopagus, as is sometimes supposed (see, e.g., Lockwood, p. 31, and James H. Hanford, *A Milton Handbook* [New York: F. S. Crofts, 1946], p. 101). Isocrates addressed the *ecclesia*, or popular assembly, on the *subject* of the powers of the Areopagus (Jebb, *Attic Orators*, II, 203); for Milton to term the *ecclesia* the "Parlament of Athens" seems a permissible licence.

¹³ Dion Prusaesus died *ca.* A.D. 117. A Greek rhetorician of Prusa in Bithynia, he went to Egypt and then to Rome, whence he was expelled for political reasons by Domitian. On the accession of his friend Nerva he returned to Rome, and was honored by both Nerva and Trajan. His speeches are largely philosophical (advocating a modified Stoicism) and political. His "Rhodian Discourse" advises repeal of the law permitting the removal of the original names from public monuments and the substitution of new ones.

ous labours, and those naturall endowments haply not the worst for two and fifty degrees of northern latitude,¹⁴ so much must be derogated, as to count me not equall to any of those who had this priviledge, I would obtain to be thought not so inferior, as your selves are superior to the most of them who receiv'd their counsell: and how farre you excell them, be assur'd, Lords and Commons, there can no greater testimony appear, then when your prudent spirit acknowledges and obeyes the voice of reason from what quarter soever it be heard speaking; and renders ye as willing to repeal any Act of your own setting forth, as any set forth by your Predecessors.¹⁵

If ye be thus resolv'd, as it were injury to thinke ye were not, I know not what should withhold me from presenting ye with a fit instance wherein to shew both that love of truth which ye eminently professe, and that uprightness of your judgement which is not wont to be partiall to your selves; by judging over again that Order

¹⁴ In the suppressed digression in *History of Britain*, Book III, Milton cites the northern climate as a cause of the intellectual shortcomings of his countrymen (Columbia, X, 325; not in 1670 ed.): "For the sunn, which wee want, ripens witts as well as fruits." See also *Reason of Church-Government, Complete Prose*, I, 814; "Manso," l.28; *Paradise Lost*, IX, 44-45. The idea is discussed in Zera S. Fink, "Milton and the Theory of Climatic Influence," *MLQ*, II (1941), 67-80.

¹⁵ With this *exordium* and the *propositio* that follows immediately (see introduction, above, pp. 170-71), cf. William Walwyn's *The Compassionate Samaritane* (1644), which opens with an address "To The Commons of England" (pp. 3-5): "To you whom the People have chosen for the managing of their affaires, I present this necessary Treatise without boldnesse and without feare: For I am well assured that as it is mine & every mans duty to furnish You with what wee conceive will advance the common good, . . . so likewise it is Your duty to heare and put in execution whatsoever to your owne judgements shall appeare conducing to those good ends. . . . In the beginning of Your Session, when our Divines (as they would have us call them) wrote freely against the Bishops, and the Bishops made complaint to You for redresse; some of You made answer that there was no remedy, for as much as the Presse was to be open and free for all in time of Parliament, I shall make bold as a Common of *England* to lay claime to that priviledge, being assured that I write nothing scandalous or dangerous to the State (which is justly and upon good grounds prohebited by Your Ordinance to that effect) only I humbly desire You to consider whether more was not gained by that Ordinance then You intended, and that though it was purposed by You to restraine the venting and dispersings of the Kings writings and his Agents, yet it hath by reason of the qualifications of the *Licensers* wrot a wrong way, and stopt the mouthes of good men, who must either not write at all, or no more then is sutable to the judgements and interests of the *Licensers*." For evidence that Milton knew this pamphlet, see introduction, above, pp. 84-87.

which ye have ordain'd ¹⁶ *to regulate Printing. That no Book, pamphlet, or paper shall be henceforth Printed, unlesse the same be first approv'd and licenc't by such*, or at least one of such as shall be thereto appointed. For that part ¹⁷ which preserves justly every mans Copy to himselfe, or provides for the poor, I touch not, only wish they be not made pretenses to abuse and persecute honest and painfull Men, who offend not in either of these particulars. But that other clause of Licencing Books, ¹⁸ which we thought had dy'd with his brother *quadregesimal* and *matrimonial* ¹⁹ when the Prelats expir'd, ²⁰ I shall now attend with such a Homily, as shall lay before ye, first the inventors of it to bee those whom ye will be loath to own; next what is to be thought in [3] generall of reading, whatever sort the Books be; and that this Order avails nothing to the suppressing of scandalous, seditious, and libellous Books, which were mainly intended to be supprest. Last, that it will be primely to the discouragement of all learning, and the stop of Truth, not only by disexercising and blunting our abilities in what we know

¹⁶ See introduction, above, pp. 162–63.

¹⁷ See Appendix B, below, p. 798.

¹⁸ See Appendix B, below, p. 797.

¹⁹ "Quadregesimal" means Lenten, and the reference is to dispensations from dietary restrictions given by the bishops to individual applicants. Matrimonial licences were dispensations by the bishops from the required publication of the banns. Milton's opposition is not, of course, really to the power of exemption, but to the original power of restriction, which he thinks a tyrannical usurpation. A misleading ambiguity rises from the dominant modern meaning of "marriage licence" as a civil registration; it should therefore be recalled that Milton had, in the divorce tracts, urged such a development, and was later to welcome its first appearance enthusiastically (*Likeliest Means*, [1659], pp. 74–76): "As for marriages, that ministers should meddle with them, as not sanctifi'd or legitimat without their celebration, I finde no ground in scripture either of precept or example . . . being of it self a civil ordinance, a houshold contract, a thing indifferent and free to the whole race of mankinde, not as religious, but as men. . . . Our divines denie it to be a sacrament; yet retaind the celebration, till prudently a late parlament recoverd the civil liberty of marriage from thir incroachment; and transferrd the ratifying and registering thereof from the canonical shop to the proper cognisance of civil magistrates." (The Act of 1656 here praised was repealed at the Restoration, and civil licensing was not reintroduced in England until the Marriage Act of 1753.)

²⁰ Presbyterianism was not established by law until January 28, 1645, and Episcopacy was not formally abolished until October 9, 1646, but the bishops may be said in effect to have "expired" on February 13, 1642, when Charles gave his consent to the Bishops Exclusion Bill. See Gardiner, *History of England*, X, 165–66.

already, but by hindring and cropping the discovery that might bee yet further made both in religious and civill Wisdome.²¹

I deny not, but that it is of greatest concernment in the Church and Commonwealth, to have a vigilant eye how Bookes demeane themselves, as well as men; and thereafter to confine, imprison, and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors: For Books are not absolutely dead things, but doe contain a potencie of life in them to be as active as that soule was whose progeny they are; nay they do preserve as in a violl the purest efficacie and extraction of that living intellect that bred them.²² I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous Dragons teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men.²³ And yet on the other hand unlesse warinesse be us'd, as good almost kill a Man as kill a good Book; who kills a Man kills a reasonable creature, Gods Image; but hee who destroyes a good Booke, kills reason it selfe, kills the Image of God, as it were in the eye. Many

²¹ Cf. Henry Robinson, *Liberty of Conscience* (1644), p. 50: "An inquisition or persecution for matters of Religion may not be tollerated: First, because it would as much as in us lyas, still withhold such saving truth and knowledge as [is] yet undiscovered, and unto which we are to attaine by degrees only, for not any of them but at first sight and hearing, is accounted heresie to most men, and much adoe there is before we will imbrace it: And secondly, in that persecution for Religion would render us altogether incapable of ever purging and reforming our selves from such erronious doctrines and superstitions, as are amongst us for the present." For evidence that Milton knew this pamphlet, see introduction, above, p. 84, and below, nn. 195, 206, 240, 265, 292, 302.

²² Cf. Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, I, viii, 6 (World's Classics, Oxford, 1929), p. 65: "The images of men's wits and knowledges remain in books. . . . Neither are they fitly to be called images, because they generate still, and cast their seeds in the minds of others, provoking and causing infinite actions and opinions in succeeding ages."

²³ See Ovid's stories of Cadmus (*Metamorphoses*, III, 101-30) and Jason (VII, 121-42). Milton's familiarity with Ovid contributed the image, but the association was probably suggested by the following passage in Pietro Sarpi's *History of the Inquisition*, tr. Robert Gentilis (1639), p. 69: "The matter of Bookes seemes to be a thing of small moment, because it treats of words, but through these words comes opinions into the world, which cause partialities, seditions, and finally warres. They are words, it is true, but such as in consequence draw after them Hosts of armed men." Milton, who refers to and copiously borrows from Sarpi's *Historie of the Councel of Trent* (see below, p. 500 and note 54), does not mention his *Inquisition*, but see below, notes 62 and 156, for further evidence that he knew it. (The English translation had been published in 1639 by Humphrey Moseley, who was to publish Milton's *Poems* the year after the publication of the *Areopagitica*.)

a man lives a burden to the Earth; but a good Booke is the pretious life-blood of a master spirit, imbalm'd and treasur'd up on purpose to a life beyond life. 'Tis true, no age can restore a life, whereof perhaps there is no great losse; and revolutions of ages doe not oft recover the losse of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole Nations fare the worse. We should be wary therefore what persecution we raise against the living labours of publick men, how we spill ²⁴ that season'd life of man preserv'd and stor'd up in Books; since we see a kinde of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdome, and if it extend to the whole impression, a kinde of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elementall life, but strikes at that ethereall and fift essence,²⁵ the breath of reason it selfe, slaies an immortality rather than a life. But lest I should be condemn'd of introducing licence, while I oppose Licencing, I refuse not the paines to be so much Historicall, as will serve to shew what hath been done by ancient and famous Commonwealths, against this disorder, till the very time that this project of licencing crept out of the *Inquisition*,²⁶ was catcht up [4] by our Prelates, and hath caught some of our Presbyters.

²⁴ spill: O.E. *spillan*, to destroy. Cf. *Faerie Queene*, III, vii, 54, where the Squire of Dames bids his lady to "commaund my life to save or spill."

²⁵ The first four—earth, water, air, and fire—are "elemental," *i.e.*, they are the elements of the material world. The fifth is "ethereal"; from it are formed the stars (*Paradise Lost*, III, 714–18):

Swift to their several Quarters hasted then
The cumbrous Elements, Earth, Flood, Aire, Fire,
And this Ethereal quintessence of Heav'n
Flew upward . . .

and turned to Starrs.

Hence the modern *quintessence*, the most essential part or feature of a substance or of a non-material thing.

²⁶ The inquiry after and the suppression of heresy by ecclesiastical and civil authority is as old as the Christian church, but the Inquisition as a distinct ecclesiastical tribunal did not come into being until 1231, when the rescripts of the Emperor Frederick II were adopted into ecclesiastical criminal law by Pope Honorius III. For the next two and a half centuries its operations were much more extensive in Germany, France, and Italy than in Spain, but Ferdinand and Isabella encouraged its reorganization in that country, and, in 1478, Torquemada was appointed first Grand Inquisitor. Thereafter the operations of the "Holy Office" in Spain were sufficiently formidable—so much so, indeed, that today the term Inquisition is more often than not used to mean the Spanish Inquisition; Milton appears to have used it in the same way: *cf.* pp. 502 ("Spanish Inquisition"), [529] ("the model of . . . *Sevil*"), and [569] ("this *authentic* Spanish

In *Athens* where Books and Wits were ever busier then in any other part of *Greece*, I finde but only two sorts of writings which the Magistrate car'd to take notice of; those either blasphemous and Atheisticall, or Libellous. Thus the Books of *Protagoras*²⁷ were by the Judges of *Areopagus*²⁸ commanded to be burnt, and himsele banisht the territory for a discourse begun with his confessing not to know *whether there were gods, or whether not*: And against defaming, it was decreed that none should be traduc'd by name, as was the manner of *Vetus Comædia*,²⁹ whereby we may guesse how they censur'd libelling: And this course was quick enough, as *Cicero* writes,³⁰ to quell both the desperate wits of other Atheists, and the open way of defaming, as the event shew'd. Of other sects and opinions though tending to voluptuousnesse, and the denying of divine providence they tooke no heed. Therefore we do not read that either

policy"). The Office was suppressed by Napoleon, but revived in 1814. In Spain it was finally suppressed by the Revolution of 1868. In Rome its coercive powers ended with the entry of the Italian army in 1870, but the Office still exists and functions.

²⁷ Cf. Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods*, I, 23; tr. C. D. Yonge (New York, 1888), p. 231: "Protagoras . . . was banished by order of the Athenians from their city and territories, and his books were publicly burned, because these words were in the beginning of his treatise concerning the Gods: 'I am unable to arrive at any knowledge whether there are, or are not, any Gods.' This treatment of him, I imagine, restrained many from professing their disbelief in a Deity." Protagoras (*ca.* 480–*ca.* 410 B.C.), the famous Sophist, was born in Abdera; a pupil of Democritus, he was influenced by Heraclitus' doctrine of the eternal flux of matter, which he adapted to knowledge. Hence his most celebrated proposition: "Man is the measure of all things: of those which are, that they are; of those which are not, that they are not." As Hales points out (p. 70), Milton "does not aim at being exhaustive, or he might have mentioned the indictments of Anaxagoras and of Aspasia for 'impiety.'"

²⁸ See above, p. 486, n. 1.

²⁹ The virulent personal lampooning which characterized the "Old Comedy" was absent from the Middle and New Comedy. Largely on the authority of Horace (*Ars Poetica*, 282 ff., esp. 306–10), it has been traditional to suppose, as Milton does, that this was due to legislation; but Gilbert Norwood (*History of Greek Comedy* [Boston, 1932], pp. 26–29), in re-examining the evidence, finds that there was only one Athenian decree restraining lampooning, that it endured only from 440 to 437 B.C. (*i.e.*, during the middle, not the final, years of the Old Comedy), that it "was an experiment that was felt to have failed," and that the changed tone of comedy after 404 B.C. was due to the change of mood that accompanied the defeat of Athens.

³⁰ Quoted in note 27 above. Cicero says nothing with respect to "defaming," and Milton's sentence should be interpreted: "this method restrained both atheistical writings (as Cicero said) and libellous (as the event showed)."

Epicurus,³¹ or that libertine school of *Cyrene*,³² or what the *Cynick*³³ impudence utter'd, was ever question'd by the Laws. Neither is it recorded that the writings of those old Comedians were suppress'd, though the acting of them were forbid; and that *Plato* commended the reading of *Aristophanes* the loosest of them all, to his royall scholler *Dionysius*,³⁴ is commonly known, and may be excus'd, if holy *Chrysostome*,³⁵ as is reported, nightly studied so much the same

³¹ The disrepute into which the teaching of Epicurus fell was due partly to the slanders of his professional rivals, partly to misunderstanding of his doctrine that pleasure is the chief good. Milton shared the widespread prejudice against him, despite the spirited defense (now generally accepted) of Diogenes Laertius, who, after recording all the usual calumnies, writes (*Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, X, 9–10 [2 vols., London: Loeb Classical Library, 1925] II, 537–39): "But these people are stark mad. For our philosopher has abundance of witnesses to attest his unsurpassed good will to all men . . . [and] the siren-charms of his doctrine. . . . His piety towards the gods and his affection for his country no words can describe." All Milton's references to Epicurus (*cf.* below, p. [517]; *Reason of Church-Government, Complete Prose*, I, 856; *Defence of Himself* (1655), p. 118; *Paradise Regained*, IV, 299) are uniformly hostile, notwithstanding the inclusion of Lucretius in the readings prescribed by *Of Education* (see above, p. 395), where the natural science of the poem, not its Epicurean philosophy, is the basis of recommendation.

³² The followers of Aristippus (*ca.* 435–356 B.C.). Born in Cyrene, he studied in Athens under Socrates, and subsequently returned to Cyrene, where he established his school. His was a hedonism which made no distinction in kind among pleasures, only in degree and duration; virtue is a good only insofar as it is productive of pleasure. There would appear to be better ground for impeaching the Cyrenaic manners and doctrine than the Epicurean; see the life of Aristippus in Diogenes Laertius, II. *Cf.* *Reason of Church-Government, Complete Prose*, I, 856.

³³ The school founded by Antisthenes (*ca.* 440–*ca.* 370 B.C.) in the gymnasium Cynosarges, whence the name Cynics. Antisthenes taught the complete sufficiency of virtue and wisdom, and contempt for pleasure and ostentation. He gained fame as much for the sharpness of his rebukes as for his positive teaching. The school's reputation for "impudence" really comes from his most famous pupil, Diogenes of Sinope, *ca.* 412–323 B.C. (to be distinguished from Diogenes of Babylonia, the Stoic, to whom note 43 refers), who exaggerated both the doctrine and the bitterness of Antisthenes, and erected studied insolence into a principle of conduct. He is best known today for his tub and lamp. See Diogenes Laertius, VI, for the lives of both men.

³⁴ The source of this tradition appears to be the anonymous ancient *Life* of Aristophanes: "They say that when Dionysius the tyrant wished to learn about the constitution of the Athenians, Plato sent him to the poetry of Aristophanes" (sec. ix; given in the Teubner edition of Aristophanes, ed. Theodorus Bergk, Leipzig, 1852, p. 37).

³⁵ Chrysostom (St. John, *ca.* 347–407), bishop of Constantinople and archbishop of Antioch, one of the most influential of the Greek church Fathers, was

Author and had the art to cleanse a scurrilous vehemence into the stile of a rousing Sermon. That other leading City of *Greece*, *Lacedaemon*, considering that *Lycurgus* their Law-giver was so addicted to elegant learning, as to have been the first that brought out of *Ionia* the scatter'd workes of *Homer*, and sent the Poet *Thales* from *Creet* to prepare and mollifie the *Spartan* surlinesse with his smooth songs and odes, the better to plant among them law and civility,³⁶ it is to be wonder'd how muselesse and unbookish they were, minding nought but the feats of Warre. There needed no licencing of Books among them for they dislik'd all, but their owne *Laconick Apothegms*, and took a slight occasion to chase *Archilochus*³⁷ out of their City, perhaps for composing in a higher straine then their owne souldierly ballats and roundels could reach to: Or if it were for his broad verses, they were not therein so cautious, but they were as dissolute in their promiscuous conversing; whence *Euripides* affirmes in *Andromache*,³⁸ that their women were all unchaste. Thus much may give us light after what sort Bookes were prohibited deprived and banished for opposing the moral "corruption," and more especially the semi-idolatry, of the Court. His use of Aristophanes was reported by Aemilius Portus in an epistle to Bisetus (quoted in *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana*, History of Greek Literature).

³⁶ "Thales" or Thaletas (to be distinguished from Thales of Miletus, the philosopher), probably seventh century B.C., was a poet and musician; assisted in perfecting Terpander's musical system at Sparta. Lycurgus, probably ninth century B.C., was the semi-legendary founder of the Spartan constitution. Both anecdotes are in Plutarch's *Lives* ("Lycurgus," IV; Bohn ed. [4 vols., London, 1906] I, 70); the one concerning the relation between Lycurgus and Thales is manifestly impossible because of the disparity in their dates. Milton had already used the story of Lycurgus collecting the Homeric fragments; see Prolusion VII, *Complete Prose*, I, 298.

³⁷ Archilochus of Paros, seventh century B.C., was a lyric and satiric poet, inventor of the iambic trimeter and trochaic tetrameter. Valerius Maximus (VI, 3) says that his poems were suppressed in Sparta because of their licentiousness; Plutarch (*Instituta Laconica*, 239B) says that the poet himself was expelled from the city because of his contention that it was better to throw away one's shield than one's life. Milton appears to have telescoped the literary and personal anecdotes into one. For an earlier reference to Archilochus, see "On the Bishop of Ely," ll. 20-22.

³⁸ L1. 590-93: "No! a Spartan maid could not be chaste, e'en if she would, who leaves her home and bares her limbs and lets her robe float free, to share with youths their races and their sports,—customs I cannot away with" (tr. E. P. Coleridge). Spartan men and women publicly performed gymnastic exercises together in the nude. The practice and its real or imagined moral effects were widely discussed; Plato (*Laws*, 806^a) and Aristotle (*Politics*, II, 9) share Euripides' view; Plutarch (*Lives*, "Lycurgus," XIII-XIV) defends the practice.

among the Greeks. The Romans also for many ages train'd up on-[5]ly to a military roughnes, resembling most the *Lacedaemonian* guise, knew of learning little but what their twelve Tables,³⁹ and the *Pontifick* College⁴⁰ with their *Augurs*⁴¹ and *Flamins*⁴² taught them in Religion and Law, so unacquainted with other learning, that when *Carneades* and *Critolaus*, with the *Stoick* *Diogenes* comming Embassadors to *Rome*, tooke thereby occasion to give the City a tast of their Philosophy, they were suspected for seducers by no lesse a man then *Cato* the Censor, who mov'd it in the Senat to dismisse them speedily, and to banish all such *Attick* bablers out of *Italy*.⁴³ But *Scipio*⁴⁴ and others of the noblest Senators withstood him and his old *Sabin* austerity; honour'd and admir'd the men;

³⁹ The importance in education attributed to the twelve "tables" by Milton is confirmed by the fact that to the end of the Republic they were memorized by Roman schoolboys. In 451 B.C. decemvirs were commissioned to reduce the unwritten customary laws of Rome into a regular legal code. They formulated ten "tables," which, in the following year, were supplemented by two more. These Twelve Tables, engraved in bronze, became the basis of the whole sytem of Roman jurisprudence.

⁴⁰ Besides ordering all matters connected with religious ceremonial, the pontific college, which was the supreme ecclesiastical authority of ancient Rome, possessed (or at least could legally claim) a monopoly of certain kinds of knowledge, especially those concerned with number and measure; hence it was entrusted with the management of the intricate Roman calendar, and dominated all public engineering projects. Its institution is attributed to Numa. The tempting etymology of the name, from the office of erecting or demolishing the sacred and politically important bridge (*pons*) over the Tiber, has long been in dispute.

⁴¹ The Roman priestly college whose function it was to take and declare the auspices, *i.e.*, to determine from the actions of birds (and later by supplementary means) whether any given public project had the approval of the gods; *cf.* below, p. 558, n. 256.

⁴² Pre-eminently the priests of the sacrificial fires. There were fifteen of them, each in the service of a particular god, and each performing sacrifice daily. *Cf.* "Nativity Ode," l. 94.

⁴³ The incident took place in 155 B.C. Athens, having sacked Oropus, was sentenced by the Roman senate to pay a heavy fine; this embassy was to ask its remission. The action of Cato, here ridiculed by Milton, has often been defended. Carneades was at least injudicious in his illustration of Sceptic dialectics: he delivered two public lectures on justice, the first of which upheld its reality, while the second demolished all the former arguments (Cicero, *De Re Publica*, III, 6). Carneades (*ca.* 213–129 B.C.) was born at Cyrene, came to Athens, studied especially the Stoics. He established the Third, or New (Sceptic), Academy. Critolaus (*ca.* 192–*ca.* 110 B.C.) was head of the Peripatetic School about the middle of the century. Diogenes of Babylonia, the Stoic (to be distinguished from Diogenes of Sinope, the Cynic, to whom note 33 refers), fl. in the second century B.C. He was head of the Stoic School about the middle of the

and the Censor himself at last in his old age fell to the study of that whereof before hee was so scrupulous.⁴⁵ And yet at the same time *Naevius* and *Plautus* the first Latine comedians had fill'd the City with all the borrow'd Scenes of *Menander* and *Philemon*.⁴⁶ Then began to be consider'd there also what was to be don to libellous books and Authors; for *Naevius* was quickly cast into prison for his unbridl'd pen, and releas'd by the *Tribunes* upon his recantation: We read also that libels were burnt, and the makers punisht by *Augustus*.⁴⁷ The like severity no doubt was us'd if ought were impiously writt'n against their esteemed gods. Except in these two points, how the world went in Books, the Magistrat kept no reckning. And therefore *Lucretius* ⁴⁸ without impeachment versifies his Epicurism to *Memmius*, and had the honour to be set forth the second time by *Cicero* so great a father of the Commonwealth; although himselfe disputes against that opinion in his own writings.⁴⁹ Nor was the Satyricall sharpnesse, or naked plainnes of *Lucilius*,

century. Cato the Censor (Marcus Porcius, 234–149 B.C.), after a distinguished military career, became censor of Rome in 184, administering his office with great rigor in opposition to all innovation, especially Greek influence. "Sabin austerity": although born in Tusculum, Cato was brought up on his father's farm in the Sabine territory, and thither he periodically returned throughout his life.

⁴⁴ Cicero consistently represents Scipio the Younger (185–129 B.C.) as a friend of Cato, but Diogenes Laertius (*Lives*, "Cato," *passim*) makes it clear that they were at least unfriendly rivals, if not outright enemies. Scipio was a leading Roman patron of Greek culture.

⁴⁵ The anecdote, reported in Cicero's *De Senectute*, VIII, 26, and Cornelius Nepos' *Life of Cato*, III, was often repeated.

⁴⁶ Naevius (*ca.* 264–*ca.* 202 B.C.), a Roman epic and dramatic poet, was imprisoned for satirizing Scipio and the Metelli in several of his comedies. Released by the Tribunes after recanting, he soon offended again, and was exiled. Plautus (*ca.* 254–184 B.C.) was the most popular comic dramatist of Rome. Menander (342–291 B.C.) was the chief dramatist of the Athenian "New Comedy." Philemon (*ca.* 361–263 B.C.) was another very popular dramatist of the New Comedy. Milton's "at the same time" needs to be taken in conjunction with the pluperfect "had filled"; at the time of this embassy (see note 43) some eighty years had passed since the performance of Naevius' first comedy, seventy since Plautus' first.

⁴⁷ See Tacitus, *Annals*, I, 72. In fact there had been a law of libel since 450 B.C. (in the Eighth Table), reinforced by a statute of 302 B.C.; see Horace, *Epistles*, II, i, 152–54.

⁴⁸ The *De Rerum Natura* of Lucretius (*ca.* 98–55 B.C.) expounds the doctrine of Epicurus (see above, p. 495, n. 31). Memmius was praetor in 58 B.C.

⁴⁹ The story that Cicero edited the *De Rerum Natura* is in Jerome's additions to the chronicle of Eusebius, although he appears to mean that this was the poem's first appearance, rather than, as Milton says, "the second time." Cicero

or *Catullus*, or *Flaccus*,⁵⁰ by any order prohibited. And for matters of State, the story of *Titus Livius*,⁵¹ though it extoll'd that part which *Pompey* held, was not therefore suppress'd by *Octavius Caesar* of the other Faction. But that *Naso* ⁵² was by him banisht in his old age, for the wanton Poems of his youth, was but a meer covert of State over some secret cause: and besides, the Books were neither banisht nor call'd in. From hence we shall meet with little else but

attacks Epicureanism in *De Natura Deorum*, I and II, *De Finibus*, I and II, and *Tusculan Disputations*, II and III; the weight of these attacks, when measured against the slightness of Jerome's authority in this matter, has caused many scholars to doubt that Cicero edited Lucretius' poem, but Lucretius' editor, H. A. J. Munro, argues in favor of the tradition, largely on the ground that "Jerome's additions to the chronicle are servilely copied from the lost work of Suetonius de viris illustribus," to which high authority attaches (*Lucretius*, Cambridge, 1873, pp. 297-301).

⁵⁰ Lucilius (ca. 148-103 B.C.) was the founder of a very strong tradition of poetical satire; Horace's *Satires*, I, iv, is partly, and I, x, wholly, devoted to a discussion of his work. Catullus (87-ca. 54 B.C.) lampooned, among others, Julius Caesar. Quintus Horatius Flaccus is the full name of Horace (65-8 B.C.).

⁵¹ The portion of Livy's *History* treating the war between Augustus and Pompey (books 109-16) has not survived, except in very brief summary. Milton's source is Tacitus' account of the defense of Cremutius Cordus, a chronicler living in the reign of Tiberius, against the charge of *lèse-majesté* in that he published praises of Brutus and Cassius. Cordus cited Livy as one of the examples of historians who reported with impunity truths unpalatable to rulers. The passage in Tacitus is of considerable interest. Ben Jonson had already translated it into English verse to form a scene in his *Sejanus* (III, i, 375-470), and Tacitus' own comment is germane enough to the *Areopagitica* to warrant quoting (*Annals*, IV, 35, tr. Arthur Murphy; *The Historical Works* [2 vols., Everyman, London: 1943], I, 207): "The fathers ordered his book to be burned by the aediles; but to destroy it was not in their power. It was preserved in secret, and copies have been multiplied: so vain and senseless is the attempt, by an arbitrary act, to extinguish the light of truth, and defraud posterity of due information. Genius thrives under oppression: persecute the author, and you enhance the value of his work." Milton quotes part of this below; see p. 542, n. 193.

⁵² Publius Ovidius Naso is the full name of Ovid (43 B.C. to A.D. 18). No more is known now than in Milton's day of the real cause of Ovid's exile; most scholars share Milton's view that the alleged immorality of the *Ars Amatoria* was only a pretext to cover a court scandal, and point out that Augustus' granddaughter Julia was banished about the same time. To speak of the poems as belonging to Ovid's youth, and the banishment as taking place in his old age, is an exaggeration: Ovid was forty-three when he was banished; the *Ars Amatoria* was published a decade earlier. Milton is right in saying that his books were not suppressed, but the *Ars Amatoria* was ordered withdrawn from the public libraries. Recently, however, there has been some disposition to think the poem "the true as well as the official cause," as L. P. Wilkinson argues; see *Ovid Recalled* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), p. 298.

tyranny in the Roman Empire, that we may not marvell, if not so often bad, as good Books were silenc't. I shall therefore deem to have bin large anough in producing what among the ancients was punishable to write, save only which, all other arguments were free to treat on.

By this time ⁵³ the Emperors were become Christians, whose discipline in this point I doe not finde to have bin more severe then what [6] was formerly in practice.⁵⁴ The Books of those whom they

⁵³ Constantine, the first emperor publicly professing Christianity, reigned A.D. 306–337.

⁵⁴ From this point to note 63 Milton draws so heavily upon Sarpi's *Historie of the Councel of Trent* (see notes 58, 59, 81, 88, and 109) that, despite its length, the relevant passage must be quoted (tr. Nathaniel Brent, 1620, pp. 472–73): "In the Church of Martyrs there was no Ecclesiasticall prohibition, though some godly men made conscience of reading bad bookes. . . . [For parts of the deleted passages, see notes 81, 88, and 109.] About the yeere 400. a Councell in *Carthage* did forbid to reade the bookes of the Gentiles, but allowed them to reade the bookes of the heretiques; the Decree whereof is amongst the Canons, collected by *Gratian*. And this was the first prohibition by way of Canon. . . . The bookes of heretiques, containing doctrine condemned by Councils, were often forbid by the Emperours for good government. . . . It suffised the Councils and Bishops to shew what bookes did containe damned or apocryphall doctrine. So did *Gelasius* in the yeere 494. and went no further, leaving it to the conscience of every one to avoide them, or reade them to a good end. After the yeere 800. the Popes of *Rome*, as they assumed a great part of the politique government, so they caused the bookes, whose authors they did condemne, to bee burned, and forbad the reading of them. Notwithstanding one shall finde but few bookes forbid in that sort, untill this age. A generall prohibition of reading bookes containing doctrine of heretiques, or suspected of heresies, upon paine of excommunication, without any further sentence, was not used. *Martinus* 5. doth in a Bull excommunicate all the Sects of heretiques, especially *Wigleffists*, and *Hussites*, not mentioning those who read their bookes, though many of them went about. *Leo* the tenth condemning *Luther*, did withall forbid all his bookes, upon paine of excommunication. The Popes following, in the Bull called *In Coena*, having condemned and excommunicated all heretiques, did excommunicate those also who reade their bookes. . . . The *Inquisitors*, being more diligent, made Catalogues of those which they knew. . . . *Philip*, King of *Spaine*, who was the first that gave a more convenient forme, in the yeere 1558, making a Law that the Catalogue of bookes prohibited by *Inquisition* should be printed. According to this example *Paul* 4. also ordayned, that an *Index* should be composed by that office, and printed; and so it was in the yeere 1559. in which they did proceed many steps further then formerly they had done. . . . Untill that time they contayned themselves within the tearmes of the bookes of the heretiques" [but, Sarpi continues, after 1559 the Index was extended to include books which were entirely irrelevant to doctrine]. Milton noted Sarpi's account in *CPB* (*Complete Prose*, I, 451), and made twelve other entries from *The Historie of Trent*; see *Complete Prose*, I, 396.

took to be grand Hereticks were examin'd, refuted, and condemn'd in the generall Councils; ⁵⁵ and not till then were prohibited, or burnt by authority of the Emperour. As for the writings of Heathen authors, unlesse they were plaine invectives against Christianity, as those of *Porphyrius* and *Proclus*,⁵⁶ they met with no interdict that can be cited, till about the year 400. in a *Carthaginian* Council,⁵⁷ wherein Bishops themselves were forbid to read the Books of Gentiles, but Heresies they might read: while others long before them on the contrary scrupl'd more the Books of Hereticks, then of Gentiles. And that the primitive Councils and Bishops were wont only to declare what Books were not commendable, passing no further, but leaving it to each ones conscience to read or to lay by, till after the yeare 800. is observ'd already by *Padre Paolo* ⁵⁸ the great unmasker of the *Trentine* Council. After which time the Popes of *Rome* engrossing what they pleas'd of Politicall rule into their owne hands, extended their dominion over mens eyes, as they

⁵⁵ As distinguished from local or regional synods. The first general or oecumenical council was convoked by Constantine in Nicaea, Bithynia, in 325, to consider the problem of Arianism; it formulated the Nicene Creed.

⁵⁶ Porphyrius, 233–305. Originally a pupil of Origen, he turned against Christianity after coming under the influence of Plotinus and wrote a treatise entitled *Against the Christians*. His works were burned by Constantine; the date is not clear, but Constantine refers to it in the past tense in a letter of 325 (Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, I, ix; Bohn ed., London, 1853, p. 31). Proclus, 412–85. A Neoplatonist, he was a declared and persistent enemy of Christianity. I have been unable to find any record of his writings being suppressed, except as they were covered by the edict, forty-four years after his death, in which Justinian suppressed the Athenian philosophical schools (Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chapter 40; Bohn variorum ed. [7 vols., London: 1867], IV, 354–55).

⁵⁷ Without citing his source, Jebb (p. 74) gives 412 as the date of this council. Hales (p. 81), citing Hallam's *Middle Ages*, calls this the "fourth Council of Carthage" and dates it 398; Hughes (1947, p. 213) gives the same title and date. Carthaginian councils were at this period so frequent (they had become almost annual affairs), and the records have suffered so severely, that many conciliar enactments cannot be accurately dated. There does not appear to have been a general council at Carthage during either 398 or 412. The regulation may belong to one of the two councils of 397, to that of 401, or possibly to 403 (*Catholic Encyclopedia*), but the effort to determine which council Milton had in mind is a fallacious approach: he was merely quoting Sarpi (see above, p. 500, n. 54).

⁵⁸ Paolo Servita was the religious name of Pietro Sarpi (1552–1623), one of the leaders of Venice in its fight to abolish papal secular supremacy. His most important works were the *Historie of the Council of Trent* (see above, note 54) and the *History of the Inquisition* (see above, note 23). See *Complete Prose*, I, 396.

had before over their judgements, burning and prohibiting to be read, what they fansied not; yet sparing in their censures, and the Books not many which they so dealt with: till *Martin* the 5.⁵⁹ by his Bull not only prohibited, but was the first that excommunicated the reading of hereticall Books; for about that time *Wicklef* and *Husse* growing terrible, were they who first drove the Papall Court to a stricter policy of prohibiting. Which cours *Leo* the 10,⁶⁰ and his successors follow'd, untill the Councell of Trent,⁶¹ and the Spanish

⁵⁹ Martin V (Otto Colonna, 1368–1431) was pope from 1417. John Wyclif (*ca.* 1324–1384) and John Huss (*ca.* 1373–1415) were the great English and Bohemian precursors of the Protestant Reformation. Milton's silent contradiction of Sarpi here (see above, note 54) is very suggestive. The matter is somewhat involved. Martin's bull of 1418 (*Inter cunctas*) was apparently published in two forms: section 16 instructs archbishops, bishops, etc., to publish it "omitting the articles and interrogatories herein contained" (*Magnum Bullarium Romanorum*, Taurinensio ed. [25 vols., 1859], IV, 675). If Sarpi saw the bull only in the abridged form, it was very natural that he should have reported that it took no action against those who merely read, without approving, Wyclifite and Hussite books. John Foxe, however, had seen the complete bull in "a certain old monument remaining in the hands of Master Hackluyt, Student in the Temple" (*Acts and Monuments*, 3 vols., 1641, I, 857). Having in an earlier context already reported the "Articles of John Wickliff to be enquired upon," he omitted these; otherwise he published the bull entire. The "interrogatories" are twenty-eight questions to be put to such as are suspected of sympathy with the ideas of Wyclif and Huss. The ninth and tenth are as follows: "9. Item, whether he have in his custodie any treatises, smal workes, epistles, or other writings in what language or tongue soever, set forth and translated by any of these heretikes, John Wickliffe, John Hus, and Jerome, or any other of their false disciples and followers, that he may deliver them to the ordinaries of that place, or his commissary, or to the inquisitors upon his oath. . . . 10. Item, whether he knoweth any that hath [such] treatises, [etc.] . . . and that he detect and manifest the same, for the purgation of their faith and execution of justice" (p. 855). The general tone of the bull (not only those who are, but even those who are only "suspected to be beleevvers, followers, fautors, defenders, or receivers" of Wyclifite or Hussite ideas are "to be excommunicate every Sunday and festivall day, in the presence of the people" [p. 856]) leaves little doubt that, whether any may have escaped who readily confessed under question nine, Martin intended that those who waited to be accused under question ten should be excommunicated. For a discussion of the light thrown on Milton's critical methods by this and other changes from Sarpi's account, see Ernest Sirluck, "Milton's Critical Use of Historical Sources," *Modern Philology*, L (1953), 226–31.

⁶⁰ Leo X (Giovanni dei Medici, 1475–1521) was pope from 1513. His bull of May 3, 1515, extended censorship to all writings.

⁶¹ The nineteenth oecumenical council, which, with several intermissions, met at Trent from December 13, 1545, to December 4, 1563, was one of the most important in history. Its primary object was a determination of doctrine to meet the challenge of Protestantism; a secondary object was reformation of ecclesi-

Inquisition engendring together brought forth, or perfeted those Catalogues, and expurging Indexes that rake through the entralls of many an old good Author, with a violation wors then any could be offer'd to his tomb.⁶² Nor did they stay in matters Hereticall, but any subject that was not to their palat, they either condemn'd in a prohibition, or had it strait into the new Purgatory of an Index. To fill up the measure of encroachment, their last invention was to ordain that no Book, pamphlet, or paper should be Printed (as if *S. Peter* had bequeath'd them the keys of the Presse also out of Paradise) unlesse it were approv'd and licenc't under the hands of 2 or 3 glutton Friers.⁶³ For example:

Let the Chancellor *Cini* be pleas'd to see if in this present work
be contain'd ought that may withstand the Printing,
Vincent Rabatta Vicar of *Florence*. [7]

I have seen this present work, and finde nothing athwart the
Catholick faith and good manners: In witnesse whereof I have
given, &c.

Nicolò Cini Chancellor of *Florence*.

astical organization and practices. Its basic decree was that in matters of faith and morals the tradition of the church is, together with the Bible, the standard of supernatural revelation; immensely important derivative decrees fixed the dogmas of justification and of the sacraments. Among the decrees of practice were two (February 25, 1562, and December 3, 1563) concerning the cataloguing of prohibited books. The Inquisition (see above, p. 493, n. 26) was reorganized by Paul III in a bull of July 21, 1542, and was charged with the supervision of books; all publication was forbidden without prior licence from the Inquisition. In 1559, during the sittings and with the advice of the Council of Trent, Paul IV issued the first *Index of Prohibited Books*, together with the *Index of Expurgations* from books otherwise permitted to be read. There had been many catalogues of forbidden books since that issued in 405 by Innocent I; what was new in the *Index* (aside from the name and form) was that, in consequence of the bull of 1515 (see above, note 60), it was universally applicable. The *Index* has since been frequently revised and constantly enforced.

⁶² The anatomical image may have been suggested by a passage in Sarpi's *Inquisition* (tr. Gentilis, 1639, p. 71), in which he returned to the subject already discussed in his *Trent*: "They have gelded the bookes of ancient Authors by new printing of them, and taken out all which might serve for Temporall authority." Cf. above, p. 492, n. 23.

⁶³ With this point Milton diverges from Sarpi. Sarpi altogether approves of licensing; his point is that the licensing power ought to belong to the church only in matters of religion, and that in secular affairs it properly belongs to the state, from which the church has usurped it. Milton's point is that licensing is in itself wrong. (Of course this does not mean that he would do away with all control over the press; see introduction, above, pp. 163-64.)

Attending the precedent relation, it is allow'd that this present work of *Davanzati*⁶⁴ may be Printed,

Vincent Rabatta, &c.

It may be Printed, *July 15.*

Friar *Simon Mompei d'Amelia* Chancellor of the holy office in *Florence*.

Sure they have a conceit, if he of the bottomlesse pit had not long since broke prison, that this quadruple exorcism would barre him down. I feare their next designe will be to get into their custody the licencing of that which they say * *Claudius* intended, but went not through with. Voutsafe to see another of their forms the Roman stamp:

Imprimatur, If it seem good to the reverend Master of the holy Palace,

Belcastro Vicegerent.

Imprimatur

Friar *Nicolò Rodolphi* Master of the holy Palace.

Sometimes 5 *Imprimaturs* are seen together dialogue-wise in the Piatza of one Title page, complementing and ducking each to other with their shav'n reverences,⁶⁵ whether the Author, who stands by in perplexity at the foot of his Epistle, shall to the Presse or to the spunge. These are the prety responsories, these are the deare Antiphonies that so bewicht of late our Prelats, and their Chaplaines with the goodly Eccho they made; and besotted us to the gay imitation of a lordly *Imprimatur*, one from Lambeth house, another from the West end of *Pauls*; ⁶⁶ so apishly Romanizing, that the word

* *Quo veniam daret flatum crepitumque ventris in convivio emittendi. Sueton. in Claudio.* (M)

⁶⁴ Bernardo Davanzati Bostichi (1529–1606), Florentine scholar and historian; the passages in the text are Milton's translations of the permissions on the flyleaf of his *Scisma d'Inghilterra*, posthumously published in Florence, 1638. Hales (p. 84) points out the possibility that the book appeared while Milton was in Florence. For Milton's further use of this book, see below, p. 518, n. 118.

⁶⁵ An allusion to the tonsure; the licensers appointed by the Inquisition were usually Dominicans.

⁶⁶ Lambeth House (now called Lambeth Palace) is the London residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The palace of the Bishop of London used to be in the precincts of St. Paul's Cathedral. *A Decree of Starre-Chamber, Concerning Printing* (1637), after reserving certain classes of books to the licensing of the senior legal authorities, the universities, the secretaries of state, and the Earl

of command still was set downe in Latine; as if the learned Grammaticall pen that wrote it, would cast no ink without Latine: or perhaps, as they thought, because no vulgar tongue was worthy to expresse the pure conceit of an *Imprimatur*; but rather, as I hope, for that our English, the language of men ever famous, and formost in the atchievements of liberty, will not easily finde servile letters anow to spell such a dictatorie presumption English. And thus ye have the Inventors and the originall of Book-licencing ript up, and drawn as lineally as any pedigree. We have it not, that can be heard of, from any [8] ancient State, or politie, or Church, nor by any Statute ⁶⁷ left us by our Ancestors elder or later; nor from the moderne custom of any reformed Citty, or Church abroad; but from the most Antichristian Councel, and the most tyrannous Inquisition that ever inquir'd. Till then Books were ever as freely admitted into the World as any other birth; the issue of the brain was no more stifl'd then the issue of the womb: no envious *Juno* sate cros-leg'd ⁶⁸ over the nativity of any mans intellectuall off spring; but if it prov'd a Monster, who denies, but that it was justly burnt, or sunk into the Sea. But that a Book in wors condition then a peccant soul, should be to stand before a Jury ere it be borne to the World, and undergo yet in darknesse the judgement of *Radamanth* and his Collegues,

Marshal, provided (517 k 3, sig. B3v) that "All other Books, whether of Divinitie, Phisicke, Philosophie, Poetry, or whatsoever, shall be allowed by the Lord Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*, or Bishop of *London* for the time being, or by their appointment." (See introduction, above, pp. 159-60.)

⁶⁷ Milton is distinguishing between "statute" and "decree." Selden, during the Parliament of 1628, said (Rushworth, *Collections*, 1721, I, 655), "There is no Law to prevent the printing of any Books in England, only a Decree in Star-Chamber."

⁶⁸ Milton does not mean that *Juno* performed in person this traditional charm to prevent or retard childbirth, but that she caused *Ilythia*, the goddess of delivery, to do so. On the day that *Juno*'s current rival for *Jove*'s attentions, *Alcmena*, was due to be delivered of *Hercules*, *Ilythia*, according to Ovid (*Metamorphoses*, IX, especially 281-323; tr. F. J. Miller [2 vols., London: Loeb Classical Library, 1928], II, 23-25), "sat upon the altar before the door, listening to my groans, with her right knee crossed over her left, and with her fingers interlocked; and so she stayed the birth" for seven days. Clement Walker had, in the previous year, made a curiously similar application of the story in *An Answer to Col: Nathaniel Fiennes* (September 23, 1643; E67[36], sig. A2): "when this Pamphlet was ready for the Presse, I found the Presse obstructed, whereby I was inforced to keep it in a moneth before I could be delivered of this Birth, some malicious *Juno* sitting crosse legged at the labour." There is nothing to indicate whether Milton knew this pamphlet.

ere it can passe the ferry backward into light,⁶⁹ was never heard before, till that mysterious iniquity⁷⁰ provokt and troubl'd at the first entrance of Reformation, sought out new limbo's⁷¹ and new hells wherein they might include our Books also within the number of their damned.⁷² And this was the rare morsell so officiously snatcht

⁶⁹ Rhadamanthus, Minos, and Aeacus were the judges of Hades. Antique literature contains many accounts of the souls of the dead pressing to get into Charon's boat, to be ferried across the Acheron into Hades proper. Virgil's account (*Aeneid*, VI, 295–330) contains an image that is echoed in *Paradise Lost*, I, 301–302: the spirits are "Countless as forest leaves that fluttering fall / In the first chill of autumn" (*Poems*, tr. James Rhoades, World's Classics ed. [Oxford, 1929] p. 134). "Backward into light" is a reversal emphasizing the absurdity of being judged before birth. For the ordinary progression, cf. *Richard III*, I, iv, 45–47: "I pass'd (methought) the melancholy flood, / With that sour ferryman which poets write of, / Unto the kingdom of perpetual night."

⁷⁰ Cf. Revelation 17:1–5: "The great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication. . . . And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." The Reformation treated Babylon as the "type" of Rome; Milton's phrase is a reference to the papacy.

⁷¹ "Limbo" does not here possess the slightly comic quality which it acquires when used for Fool's Paradise (cf. *Paradise Lost*, III, 440–97); it means a genuinely infernal region (Hales [p. 87] cites *Faerie Queene*, I, ii, 32: "What voice of *damned* ghost from limbo lake?"). The meaning of the passage has been perplexed by unnecessarily ingenious interpretation; it would appear to be, quite simply, that since hell proper was made for the accommodation of damned *souls*, the papacy was, as it were, obliged to extend the borders (*limbus*: a border) of hell to accommodate the *books* it proposed to damn. Five months before *Areopagitica*, a royalist verse satire entitled *Sampsons Foxes Agreed to Fire a Kingdom*, arguing that Puritans were really just like Jesuits, said (Oxford, June 22, 1644; E52[6], p. 5):

Limbus and Purgatorie they believe,
For lesser sinners, that is, I conceive,
Malignants onelie; you this trick does please,
For the same cause y' have made new *Limbus's*,
Where we may lie imprison'd long, ere we
A day of judgment in your Court shall see.

⁷² Hezekiah Woodward, whose name was bracketed with Milton's in a complaint about unlicensed books which the Stationers made to the House of Lords, and in the order the Lords issued thereupon (see introduction, above, p. 114), published, about a month after *Areopagitica*, a pamphlet entitled *Inquiries into the Causes of our Miseries* (December 23, 1644). Among other indications that it was influenced by *Areopagitica* is the following (E22[1], p. 1): "Touching my licence here, I have no *Imprimatur*, no licence to speak. To which I could answer, Yes, that I have, for by the grace of God, *Truth*, and *Reason*, the old Licensers of old, have licenced my words all along. And truly my spirit could never go forth with any other way of licensing, or *midwifring* such births as are books into the world . . . And if he be *Libellous*, as too many are, let his own place the pillory instruct him to better manners. But if he has blasphemed *God*, or the *King of*

up, and so ilfavourdly imitated by our inquisiturient Bishops, and the attendant minorites their Chaplains.⁷³ That ye like not now these most certain Authors of this licencing order, and that all sinister intention was farre distant from your thoughts, when ye were importun'd the passing it, all men who know the integrity of your actions, and how ye honour Truth, will clear yee readily.

But some will say, What though the Inventors were bad, the thing for all that may be good? It may so; yet if that thing be no such deep invention, but obvious, and easie for any man to light on, and yet best and wisest Commonwealths through all ages, and occasions have forborne to use it, and falsest seducers, and oppressors of men were the first who tooke it up, and to no other purpose but to obstruct and hinder the first approach of Reformation; I am of those who beleeve, it will be a harder alchymy then *Lullius*⁷⁴ ever knew, to sublimat any good use out of such an invention. Yet this only is what I request to gain from this reason, that it may be held a dangerous and suspicious fruit, as certainly it deserves, for the tree that bore it, untill I can dissect one by one the properties it has. But I have first to finish, as was propounded, what is to be thought in generall of reading Books, what ever sort they be, and whether be more the benefit, or the harm that thence proceeds?

Not to insist upon the examples of *Moses*, *Daniel* & *Paul*, who were [9] skilfull in all the learning of the Ægyptians, Caldeans,

Saints, let him find neither friend nor enemy, but let him dye, if he has blasphemed his God. Gods Law this, and mans Law that, carried all along through a series of time, and never interrupted, nor reversed, or made null till it came thorough the Inquisition Court at Rome, whence we have our *Imprimatur*, Let this be printed. And then sure enough it served to promote the Doctrines, and practices of the Church there, which my soul abominates." Woodward appears to have been the first of several tolerationists to adopt Milton's genealogy of licensing (see introduction, above, pp. 87, 89, 91).

⁷³ The name Friars Minor was adopted to represent the humility enjoined upon his order by Francis ("Let no one be called prior, but let all be called lesser brethren"). It was an especial reproach of the Reformation that the order proclaimed humility and practised arrogance; the Puritans thought that the office and conduct of the chaplains of English bishops opened them to the same charge.

⁷⁴ Raymond Lully (*ca.* 1234–1315) was an Italian born at Majorca. The memory of his death (he was stoned by the Moslems of Mauretania, whom he was attempting to convert to Christianity) was soon overwhelmed by the fame of his writings on chemistry, medicine, and logic, and he became a kind of patron saint of alchemists.

and Greeks,⁷⁵ which could not probably be without reading their Books of all sorts, in *Paul* especially, who thought it no defilement to insert into holy Scripture the sentences of three Greek Poets,⁷⁶ and one of them a Tragedian, the question was, notwithstanding, sometimes controverted among the Primitive Doctors, but with great odds on that side which affirm'd it both lawfull and profitable, as was then evidently perceiv'd, when *Julian* the Apostat, and subtlest enemy to our faith, made a decree forbidding Christians the study of heathen learning; for, said he, they wound us with our own weapons, and with our owne arts and sciences they overcome us.⁷⁷ And indeed the Christians were put so to their shifts by this

⁷⁵ Acts 7:22: "And Moses was learned in all the widom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds." Daniel 1:17: "As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams." Basil uses the examples of Moses and Daniel to the same purpose, and in approximately this language, in "The Right Use of Greek Literature" (F. M. Padelford, tr., *Essays by Plutarch and Basil*, New York, 1902, p. 104); since Milton refers to this essay elsewhere in the *Areopagitica* (see below, p. 510, n. 84), it is probable that it was his source here. Paul's education was predominantly Hebrew (Acts 22:3: "I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city [Jerusalem] at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers"), but he made effective use of what knowledge he had of Greek literature; for example, when preaching to the Athenians he sought to make them more receptive to his doctrine by representing it as in part their own (Acts 17:28): "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."

⁷⁶ The sentences (*sententiae*) are the one which closes the preceding note, from Aratus; Titus 1:12, from Epimenedes; and I Corinthians 15:33, from Euripides ("one of them a tragedian"; cf. Milton's preface to *Samson Agonistes*). Milton's source was Socrates' *Ecclesiastical History*, III, 16, where he shows that Paul was quoting from the Greek poets, and uses this as evidence that it is proper for Christians to read pagan books. Milton had noted this passage in *CPB*, probably 1635-1637; see *Complete Prose*, I, 376-77; for evidence that Milton had Socrates before him as he wrote this paragraph, see below, note 79.

⁷⁷ Julian the Apostate (Flavius Claudius Julianus, 331-63), emperor of Rome from 361. The nephew of Constantine, he was originally a Christian; subsequently he became a convert to the old Roman gods, and, as Emperor, made some efforts to return Rome to its earlier religion. The story of the decree is in Socrates (III, 12), but with a different version of Julian's comment; Milton's source just here was a passage (noted in *CPB* probably 1635-1637; see *Complete Prose*, I, 377), in Theodoret, *History of the Church*, III, 8 (Bohn, London, 1854, p. 135): Julian "prohibited the . . . Christians from being instructed in poetry, rhetoric, or philosophy. 'For we,' said he, 'are, according to the old proverb, smitten by our own wings; for our authors furnish weapons to carry

crafty means, and so much in danger to decline into all ignorance, that the two *Apollinarii* were fain as a man may say, to coin all the seven liberall Sciences⁷⁸ out of the Bible, reducing it into divers forms of Orations, Poems, Dialogues, ev'n to the calculating of a new Christian Grammar. But saith the Historian *Socrates*,⁷⁹ The providence of God provided better then the industry of *Apollinarius* and his son, by taking away that illiterat law with the life of him who devis'd it. So great an injury they then held it to be depriv'd of *Hellenick* learning; and thought it a persecution more undermining, and secretly decaying the Church, then the open cruelty of *Decius* or *Dioclesian*.⁸⁰ And perhaps it was the same politick drift that the

on war against us.' " There is some confusion here. Julian's decree forbade the election of Christians as teachers, but it was constantly represented by Christians as forbidding their children to be taught the arts. Gibbon, in a footnote, explains this disparity convincingly (*Decline and Fall*, chap. 23; Bohn, II, 541-42): "The Christians were *directly* forbidden to teach; they were indirectly forbidden to learn, since they would not frequent the schools of the Pagans."

⁷⁸ The seven liberal "sciences" were the *trivium* (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) and the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music).

⁷⁹ Socrates Scholasticus (ca. 385-ca. 440), the great church historian, whose *Ecclesiastical History*, together with that of Eusebius (of which it is a continuation; see below, p. 511, n. 87) is still the primary source of information on the primitive church; see *Complete Prose*, I, 376-77, note 1. Milton is paraphrasing a passage in Book III, Chapter 16 (Bohn, London, 1853, pp. 191-92): "The imperial law which forbade Christians to study Grecian literature, rendered the two Appolinales . . . much more distinguished than before. For both being skilled in polite learning, the father as a grammarian, and the son as a rhetorician, they each became exceedingly serviceable to the Christians at this crisis. For the former, according to his art, composed a grammar consistent with the Christian faith: he also translated the books of Moses into heroic verse; and paraphrased all the historical books of the Old Testament, putting them partly into dactylic measure, and partly reducing them to the form of dramatic tragedy. He purposely employed all kinds of verse, that no form of expression peculiar to the Greek language might be unknown or unheard of amongst Christians. The younger Appolinaris, who was well trained in eloquence, expounded the Gospels and apostolic doctrines in the way of dialogue, following Plato among the Greeks as his model. By this joint service to the Christian cause, they baffled the emperor's subtlety. But Divine Providence was more potent than either of their labours, or the craft they had to contend with: for death in carrying off its framer . . . rendered the law wholly inoperative." Julian's successor, Jovian, who was a Christian, emancipated the Christians from all legal disabilities.

⁸⁰ Decius Trajanus (201-251), emperor of Rome from 249. In his effort to restore the ancient religion of Rome, he instituted a systematic persecution of Christianity. Diocletian (245-313), emperor from 284 to his abdication in 305. He returned to the anti-Christian policy of Decius.

Divell whipt St. *Jerom*⁸¹ in a lenten dream, for reading *Cicero*; or else it was a fantasm bred by the feaver which had then seis'd him. For had an Angel bin his discipliner, unlesse it were for dwelling too much upon Ciceronianisms,⁸² & had chastiz'd the reading, not the vanity, it had bin plainly partiall; first to correct him for grave *Cicero*, and not for scurrill *Plautus*⁸³ whom he confesses to have bin reading not long before; next to correct him only, and let so many more ancient Fathers wax old in those pleasant and florid studies without the lash of such a tutoring apparition; insomuch that *Basil*⁸⁴ teaches how some good use may be made of *Margites*⁸⁵

⁸¹ Jerome (ca. 340–420) was a scholar, controversialist, and the author of the revised translation of the Bible which goes by his name and which became (with some revision) the Vulgate. His love of Roman literature interfered, for some time, with his devotion to Christian doctrine, and his renunciation of secular studies cost him much pain. His eighteenth *Epistle*, "To Eustochium on Virginity," tells of falling into a severe fever during Lent, of being caught up in spirit and brought before God, and of being questioned with regard to the state of his soul. He answered that he was a Christian, but the answer was not accepted, for his heart was possessed by the writings of Cicero, and an angel promoted his reformation with the lash. Jerome strove to prevent the affair from being dismissed as only a dream (always thought a less certain form of divine illumination than a vision); he insisted that he had not been asleep, and that when he issued from the vision he found the marks of the whipping on his body. He neglected to provide against Milton's alternative deprecation, that it was a real enough whipping, but administered by the devil impersonating an angel. Milton found the suggestion in Sarpi; one of the deletions mentioned in note 54 is: "Yet they thought there was greater danger in the bookes of the Gentiles, then of the heretiques, the reading whereof was more abhorred and reprehended, because it was more used by Christian Doctors for a vanitie of learned eloquence. For this cause S. *Hierom*, either in a vision, or in a sleepe, was beaten by the Devill" (*Trent*, p. 472).

⁸² The exaggerated devotion to the style of Cicero of many Renaissance purists was frequently remarked and ridiculed; see, e.g., the *Ciceronianus* of Erasmus.

⁸³ See Jerome, *Epistle XVIII*. For Plautus, see above, p. 498, n. 46.

⁸⁴ Basil the Great (ca. 330–379), bishop of Caesarea from 370, was the author of the "Rules" followed by Basilian monks. The general sense of *The Right Use* (see note 75) is that good Christian use may be made of pagan writings (e.g., "Now this is my counsel, that you should not unqualifiedly give over your minds to these men, as a ship is surrendered to the rudder, to follow whither they list, but that, while receiving whatever of value they have to offer, you yet recognize what it is wise to ignore" [Padelford, p. 102]). Basil illustrates the method copiously from, among others, Homer, but not from the *Margites*, which he mentions only once and in a different connection. Milton may however mean that Basil "teaches" how to make good use of the *Margites*, not directly, but by ex-

a sportfull Poem, not now extant, writ by *Homer*; and why not then of *Morgante* ⁸⁶ an Italian Romanze much to the same purpose. But if it be agreed we shall be try'd by visions, there is a vision recorded by *Eusebius* ⁸⁷ far ancienter then this tale of *Jerom* to the Nun *Eustochium*, and besides has nothing of a feavor in it. *Dionysius Alexandrinus* ⁸⁸ was about the year 240, a person of great name in the Church for piety and learning, who had wont to avail himself much against hereticks by [10] being conversant in their Books; untill a certain Presbyter laid it scrupulously to his conscience, how he durst venture himselfe among those defiling volumes. The worthy man loath to give offence fell into a new debate with himselfe what was to be thought; when suddenly a vision sent from God, it is his own Epistle ⁸⁹ that so averrs it, confirm'd him in these words: Read any books what ever come to thy hands, for thou art sufficient both to judge aright, and to examine each matter. To this revelation he assented the sooner, as he confesses, because it was answerable to that of the Apostle to the Thessalonians, Prove

ample, since he uses it in another context to help make the point that idleness is unworthy (p. 113).

⁸⁵ A mock-heroic poem (of which only four lines are extant) ascribed to Homer by, among others, Plato (*Second Alcibiades*, 147^c) and Aristotle (*Poetics*, IV, 10); its true authorship is not known.

⁸⁶ Luigi Pulci published his mock-heroic romance *Il Morgante Maggiore* at Venice in 1481.

⁸⁷ Eusebius Pamphilius (ca. 264–ca. 340), bishop of Caesarea, is called “Father of ecclesiastical history”; his is the first organized account of the church, and (together with the continuation by Socrates; see above, note 79) it remains the primary source of information on the primitive church. See *Complete Prose*, I, 376–77.

⁸⁸ Dionysius Alexandrinus (ca. 190–265) was bishop of Alexandria from 247. The story derives from his “Third Epistle, Concerning Baptism, to Philemon,” and is reported in Eusebius, VII, 7, where Milton appears first to have seen it (he entered it in *CPB* from Eusebius; see *Complete Prose*, I, 377); but neither of these sources assigns a date to the incident. Milton apparently took the date from Sarpi's *Trent*. The second deletion mentioned in note 54 is: “But . . . the example of *Dionysius*, Bishop of *Alexandria*, a famous Doctor, did happen, who about the yeere of our Lord 240. being reprehended by his Priests for these causes, and troubled with these respects, had a vision that hee should reade all bookes, because hee was able to judge of them” (p. 472).

⁸⁹ It is unlikely that Milton means that he went from Eusebius, to whom he has already attributed the story, to Dionysius' own epistle for verification; rather, he seems to be emphasizing the fact that Eusebius states (VII, 7) that he is quoting the epistle directly.

all things, hold fast that which is good.⁹⁰ And he might have added another remarkable saying of the same Author; To the pure all things are pure,⁹¹ not only meats and drinks, but all kinde of knowledge whether of good or evill; the knowledge cannot defile, nor consequently the books, if the will and conscience be not defil'd. For books are as meats and viands are; some of good, some of evill substance; and yet God in that unapocryphall vision,⁹² said without exception, Rise *Peter*, kill and eat, leaving the choice to each mans discretion. Wholesome meats to a vitiated stomack differ little or nothing from unwholesome; and best books to a naughty mind are not unappliable to occasions of evill.⁹³ Bad meats will scarce breed good nourishment in the healthiest concoction;⁹⁴ but herein the difference is of bad books, that they to a discreet and judicious Reader serve in many respects to discover, to confute, to forewarn, and to

⁹⁰ I Thessalonians 5:21. Milton's quotation of this verse is a remarkable substitution for what he found. Dionysius' epistle actually says (*St. Dionysius of Alexandria, Letters and Treatises*, tr. C. L. Feltoe, London, 1918, p. 57), "I acknowledged the vision as in agreement with the apostolic voice which says to the more able: 'Approve yourselves bankers of repute,' " and is so reported in Eusebius. This "apostolic" injunction, although attested by Origen and Jerome, had long before Milton's day been rejected as apocryphal, and no longer appeared in Scripture. But in the digression of Socrates which Milton used for the story of the Appolinarii (see above, p. 509, n. 79) there occurs the following (III, 16; Bohn, p. 193): "Both Christ and his apostle enjoin us 'to become discriminating money-changers, so that we might "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good."'" Milton apparently remembered this linkage of the apocryphal to a canonical verse, and regarded it as justifying the substitution.

⁹¹ Titus 1:15.

⁹² Acts 10:9-16. Peter, who had hitherto observed the Jewish ceremonial law, was hungry, and had a vision of a vessel let down from heaven, full of animals prohibited by the dietary law. He was bidden to eat, and further events caused him to interpret this to mean that it was no longer unlawful for a Jew to associate with Gentiles. However, the passage can be made to bear Milton's interpretation. Cf. *Doctrine and Discipline*, above, p. 261. "Unapocryphall," in contrast to Jerome's "fantasm."

⁹³ This observation could be made with an intent opposite to Milton's; thus the Presbyterian Richard Vines, in a sermon exhorting the City against toleration, urged that a claim to the warrant of Scripture was no assurance that a doctrine was sound, and continued: "The Spider sucks poyson out of the Rose, not that I would imply that there is any such thing in the Word it selfe (for *ex veris nil nisi verum*) but that a corrupt stomacke concocts wholesome food into disease." See *The Impostures of Seducing Teachers* (April 23, 1644), E48(2), p. 13.

⁹⁴ Digestion. Cf. *Of Education*, above, p. 411: "The like also would not be unexpedient after Meat to assist and cherish Nature in her first concoction."

illustrate. Wherof what better witnes can ye expect I should produce, then one of your own now sitting in Parliament, the chief of learned men reputed in this Land, Mr. *Selden*, whose volume of naturall & national laws proves, not only by great authorities brought together, but by exquisite reasons and theorems almost mathematically demonstrative, that all opinions, yea errors, known, read, and collated, are of main service & assistance toward the speedy attainment of what is truest.⁹⁵ I conceive therefore, that when God did enlarge the universall diet of mans body, saving ever the rules of temperance, he then also, as before, left arbitrary the dyeting and repasting of our minds; as wherein every mature man might have to exercise his owne leading capacity. How great a vertue is temperance, how much of moment through the whole life of man? yet God committs the managing so great a trust, without particular Law or prescription, wholly to the demeanour of every grown man. And therefore when he himself tabl'd the Jews from heaven,⁹⁶ that Omer which was every mans daily portion of [11] Manna, is computed to have bin more then might have well suffic'd the heartiest feeder thrice as many meals. For those actions which enter into a man, rather then issue out of him, and therefore defile not,⁹⁷ God

⁹⁵ John Selden (1584–1654) was a lawyer, legal historian, orientalist, and parliamentarian. He was several times imprisoned by Charles for his opposition to the extreme interpretation of the royal prerogative, and became one of the leaders of the Erastian group in the Long Parliament. His *De Jure Naturali et Gentium juxta Disciplinam Ebraeorum* (1640; UCL, p. 2) opens with a prefatory statement containing the following passage: "Among these men it is a firmly established usage not only to make known what they have come upon among others, in exact or approximate agreement with their own convictions or those of the groups and sects with which they are associated, but also on many occasions similarly to publish opposed and disagreeing views and ordinances of other sects. They have very weighty reasons for this, for in this way they not only confirm their own doctrines to no small degree by the approval of others, but they further acquire the means of detecting and delimiting with nicety the subtle lines of demarcation which distinguish their tenets from dissenting ones, of removing the mask from the falsehood which often approximates and counterfeits truth, and of accomplishing more readily whatever else of this nature a scrupulous search for the truth is likely to entail." (This translation was made for me by my colleague Richard T. Bruère, Professor of Latin at the University of Chicago.) Milton had already praised the *De Jure Naturali* for its demonstration that positive law must not contravene natural law; see *Doctrine and Discipline*, above, p. 350.

⁹⁶ Exodus 16.

⁹⁷ Matthew 15:17–20; Mark 7:14–23.

uses not to captivat under a perpetuall childhood of prescription, but trusts him with the gift of reason to be his own chooser; there were but little work left for preaching, if law and compulsion should grow so fast upon those things which hertofore were govern'd only by exhortation. *Salomon* informs us that much reading is a wearines to the flesh; ⁹⁸ but neither he, nor other inspir'd author tells us that such, or such reading is unlawfull: yet certainly had God thought good to limit us herein, it had bin much more expedient to have told us what was unlawfull, then what was wearisome. As for the burning of those Ephesian books by St. *Pauls* converts, tis reply'd the books were magick, the Syriack so renders them.⁹⁹ It was a privat act, a voluntary act, and leaves us to a voluntary imitation: the men in remorse burnt those books which were their own; the Magistrat by this example is not appointed: these men practiz'd the books, another might perhaps have read them in some sort usefully. Good and evill we know in the field of this World grow up together almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good is so involv'd and interwoven with the knowledge of evill, and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be discern'd, that those confused seeds which were impos'd on *Psyche* as an incessant labour to cull out, and sort asunder, were not more intermixt.¹⁰⁰ It was from out the rinde of one apple tasted, that the knowledge of good and evill as two twins cleaving together leapt forth into the World.¹⁰¹ And perhaps this is that doom which *Adam* fell into of knowing good and evill, that is to say of knowing good by evill. As therefore the state of man now is; what wisdom can there be to choose, what continence to forbear without the knowledge of evill? He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which

⁹⁸ Ecclesiastes 12:12.

⁹⁹ Acts 19:19.

¹⁰⁰ The story of Cupid and Psyche is in Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, IV–VI. Venus, as part of the abuse she visited upon her daughter-in-law, “tooke a great quantity of wheat, of barly, poppy seede, peason, lintles, and beanes, and mingled them altogether on a heape saying . . . see that thou separate all these graines one from another, disposing them orderly in their quantity, and let it be done before night” (tr. William Adlington, 1566 [London, John Lehman, 1946], p. 125). The seeds were sorted out by helpful ants.

¹⁰¹ Genesis 3:5 and 22.

is truly better, he is the true warfaring ¹⁰² Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloister'd vertue, unexercis'd & unbreath'd, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortall garland ¹⁰³ is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather: ¹⁰⁴ that which purifies us is triall, and triall is by what is contrary. That vertue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evill, and knows not the utmost [12] that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank

¹⁰² The printed text has *wayfaring*. All four presentation copies and "F" have the y crossed through in ink and an r written above it. (Three more copies, which I have not examined and which have no known connection with Milton, are reported to have the same correction: one is in the University Library of Lausanne, the other two in the University Library at Cambridge; see G. A. Bonnard, *R.E.S.*, IV [1928], 434–38, and Helen Darbishire, *R.E.S.*, VII [1931], 72–73.) In the presentation copies (but not in "F") the inserted r's all have a similar form, resembling Milton's r's. It has been contended that the changes were made by Milton himself, but this cannot be proved (Miss Darbishire argues against it). The changes were probably not made out of the same inkwell: in the Young copy the ink is, like that of all four inscriptions, faded brown; in the Yale copy it is dark gray; in the Thomason and Rous copies it is still shiny black. Furthermore, in the Thomason copy the change was not made in the same ink as the correction on p. [34] (see below, p. 778, textual notes), since that is faded brown (in *Rous*, *Yale*, and "F" the ink at p. [34] is similar to that at p. [12] in each copy; *Young* does not contain the later correction). It can scarcely be doubted, however, that the change has Milton's authority, and was made, if not by himself, by the printer or bookseller after the error was discovered. (1) All known presentation copies, and some others, have it. (2) Milton's manuscript r's are easily confusable with y's. (3) There is no other instance in Milton of either "wayfaring" or "warfaring," but "Christian warfare" occurs several times, while the image of the Christian pilgrimage, frequently found elsewhere, never occurs in Milton. (4) The argument from literary propriety is not decisive, but its weight is on the side of "warfaring." "Wayfaring" has been thought to have some relation to the image of a race, but is it the pilgrim or the warrior who participates in such games? And the main image is that of struggle; e.g., "adversary," and "triall is by what is contrary." Earlier in 1644 Milton had used the phrase "Christian warfare" in a context very similar to this one (*Doctrine and Discipline*, above, p. 228).

¹⁰³ "that immortal garland": Reference uncertain, but the image of the race suggests 1 Corinthians 9:24–25 ("Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? . . . Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."), while the idea of resisting temptation suggests James 1:12 ("Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life.").

¹⁰⁴ *Christian Doctrine*, I, 11: "The sin which is common to all men is that which our first parents, and in them all their posterity committed."

safely, and with lesse danger scout into the regions of sin and falsity then by reading all manner of tractats, and hearing all manner of reason? And this is the benefit which may be had of books promiscuously read. But of the harm that may result hence three kinds are usually reckn'd. First, is fear'd the infection that may spread;¹⁰⁹ but then all human learning and controversie in religious points must remove out of the world, yea the Bible it selfe; for that oftentimes relates blasphemy not nicely, it describes the carnall sense of wicked men not unelegantly, it brings in holiest men passionately murmuring against providence through all the arguments of *Epicurus*: in other great disputes it answers dubiously and darkly to the common reader: And ask a Talmudist¹¹⁰ what ails the modesty of his marginall Keri, that *Moses* and all the Prophets cannot perswade him to pronounce the textuall Chetiv.¹¹¹ For these causes we all know the Bible it selfe put by the Papist into the first rank of prohibited books. The ancientest Fathers must be next remov'd, as *Clement of Alexandria*,¹¹² and that *Eusebian* book of Evangelick preparation,¹¹³ transmitting our ears through a hoard of heathenish obscen-

¹⁰⁹ The third deletion mentioned in note 54 is: "some godly men made conscience of reading bad bookes, for feare of offending against one of the three points of the Law of God, to avoid the contagion of evill; not to expose ones selfe to temptation, without necessitie or profite; and not to spend time vainely" (*Trent*, p. 472). Cf. below, p. 521, and note 129.

¹¹⁰ The *Talmud* (noun related to the verb *limmed*, to teach) embraces both the primary (*Mishnah*) and secondary (*Gemara*) Hebraic commentaries upon Scripture. It is thus the codification of an oral tradition of Biblical exegesis laying claim to an authority second only to Scripture itself. It exists in two redactions, the *Talmud* of the West (usually called the *Jerusalem Talmud*) and the more comprehensive and systematic Babylonian *Talmud*. Milton evidently means by Talmudist not a compiler but a student of the *Talmud*.

¹¹¹ *Keri* and *Chetiv* are technical terms of *Masorah*, the textual criticism of Hebrew Scripture. When a textual reading (*Chetiv*) is suspected of corruption, or when it is thought unseemly (e.g., the use of the names of pagan deities to indicate Jehovah), or when, in the frequently recurrent case of the tetragrammaton *YHWH*, it is forbidden to pronounce it, the margin provides an emendation or a euphemism to be read (*Keri*); an alteration of the received text itself is not considered permissible. Cf. *An Apology, Complete Prose*, I, 902.

¹¹² Clement of Alexandria (fl. second century) was the first church father to bring an intimate knowledge of Greek religion, philosophy, and art into the service of Christianity. Milton is thinking of Clement's *Hortatory Address to the Greeks*, in which, to dissuade his hearers from participation in certain pagan rites, he describes these with much emphasis on their lewdness and obscenity.

¹¹³ See above, p. 511, n. 87. What was said of Clement's *Hortatory Address* in note 112 is applicable to Eusebius' *Evangelical Preparation*.

ities to receive the Gospel. Who finds not that *Irenaeus*, *Epiphanius*, *Jerom*,¹¹⁴ and others discover more heresies then they well confute, and that oft for heresie which is the truer opinion. Nor boots it to say for these, and all the heathen Writers of greatest infection, if it must be thought so, with whom is bound up the life of human learning, that they writ in an unknown tongue, so long as we are sure those languages are known as well to the worst of men, who are both most able, and most diligent to instill the poison they suck, first into the Courts of Princes, acquainting them with the choisest delights, and criticisms¹¹⁵ of sin. As perhaps did that *Petronius*¹¹⁶ whom *Nero* call'd his *Arbiter*, the Master of his revels; and that notorious ribald of *Arezzo*,¹¹⁷ dreaded, and yet dear to the Italian Courtiers. I name not him for posterities sake, whom [13] *Harry* the 8. nam'd in merriment his Vicar of hell.¹¹⁸ By which compendious way all the contagion that foreine books can infuse, will finde a passage to the people farre easier and shorter then an Indian voyage, though it could be sail'd either by the North of *Cataio*

¹¹⁴ Irenaeus (ca. 140–ca. 202) was bishop of Lyons from 177. His only surviving work is *Against Heresies*. Epiphanius (315–403) was bishop of Constantia from 367. His chief work, *Panarion*, describes and attacks eighty heresies. For Jerome, see above, p. 510, n. 81.

¹¹⁵ Criticisms: critical refinements, *elegantiae*.

¹¹⁶ Gaius Petronius (d. A.D. 66), author of the famous *Satyricon*, was the favorite of Nero. The title *arbiter elegantiarum* is reported in Tacitus, *Annals*, XVI, 18.

¹¹⁷ Pietro Aretino (1492–1557) was born in Arezzo. He was an accomplished poet of lewdness and the most famous of all literary blackmailers.

¹¹⁸ Until recently there was lively speculation on the identity concealed beneath this phrase; among the many suggested identifications were Skelton, Wolsey, Thomas Cromwell, Andrew Borde, and a ballad-maker named Gray. Hughes (1947, p. 227) was the first to suggest Anne Boleyn's cousin, "the very minor poet Sir Francis Brian, to whom Thomas Cromwell repeatedly referred as 'the Vicar of Hell.'" Harris Fletcher has since put this identification out of controversy by finding the following passage in Davanzati's *English Schism*, a book we know Milton to have used in writing the *Areopagitica* (see above, p. 504, n. 64): "[Sir] Thomas [Boleyn] had by this his wife a daughter, half-grown, whom the King saw when he went to visit her mother, and whom he took to court and to his bedroom, and once he asked Francis Bryan, born of the Boleyn family, the finest of all the very wicked courtiers of which the court was full, 'What sin would he have committed who lay first with the mother, and then with the daughter?' He [Bryan] answered, 'The same as he who eats first the hen and then the pullet.' The King died of laughing and said, 'You are indeed my Vicar of Hell' (he was already called the King's Vicar of Hell because of his ungodliness) whence everyone afterward so called him." See *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, XLVII (1948), 387–89.

Eastward, or of *Canada* Westward,¹¹⁹ while our Spanish licencing gags the English Presse never so severely. But on the other side that infection which is from books of controversie in Religion, is more doubtfull and dangerous to the learned, then to the ignorant; and yet those books must be permitted untoucht by the licencer.¹²⁰ It will be hard to instance where any ignorant man hath bin ever seduc't by Papisticall book in English, unlesse it were commended and expounded to him by some of that Clergy: and indeed all such tractats whether false or true are as the Prophetie of *Isaiah* was to the *Eunuch*, not to be *understood without a guide*.¹²¹ But of our Priests and Doctors how many have bin corrupted by studying the comments of Jesuits and *Sorbonists*,¹²² and how fast they could transfuse that corruption into the people, our experience is both late and sad.¹²³ It is not forgot, since the acute and distinct *Arminius*

¹¹⁹ The principal goal of marine exploration was still the discovery of Northeast or Northwest passages to the "Indies." *Cataio* is a variant of Cathay, or China.

¹²⁰ Milton is here strangely forgetful or somewhat naively sophistical. The Licensing Order does not contain the slightest suggestion that "books of controversie in Religion" were to be exempted; on the contrary, the licensing of such books was specifically provided for (see Appendix B, below, p. 797). Indeed, it may well be supposed that such books were, next to royalist publications, the chief object of the Order—a supposition shared by Milton himself, if the over-all emphasis of the argument in *Areopagitica* is any evidence (and see below, note 218). The meaning of "must be permitted untouched by the licenser" has therefore to be sought elsewhere than in the Order. It is to be found in the fourth sentence below: such books "cannot be suppressed without the fall of learning." The inference is that since Parliament will be unwilling to bring about the fall of learning, it will be obliged to exempt books of religious controversy, thus leaving open a gate of infection so important that it will render the whole scheme of licensing nugatory. How such an argument could be advanced against the evidence of the already existent Order is difficult to understand.

¹²¹ Acts 8:27–35.

¹²² The Sorbonne was originally the theological school founded in 1252 by Robert de Sorbon, but its distinction was such that the whole faculty of theology in the University of Paris came to be known by that name (ultimately the name was extended to embrace the faculties of letters and science). It was one of the most influential centres of Roman Catholic polemic. Cf. *A Defence*, Chapter III.

¹²³ "Our Priests" and "our experience" suggest that Milton is thinking, in this sentence, of English churchmen, separately from his reference to Arminius in the next sentence. It was a standard Puritan complaint that the Episcopalian clergy were very susceptible to, and even promoted, Roman Catholic proselytization; e.g., Harbottle Grimston's speech in the Commons seconding the motion to impeach Laud (John Nalson, *An Impartial Collection of the Great Affairs of State* [2 vols., 1682; UCL] I, 690): "Who is it Mr. *Speaker* but he only that

was perverted meerly by the perusing of a namelesse discours writt'n at *Delf*, which at first he took in hand to confute.¹²⁴ Seeing therefore that those books, & those in great abundance which are likeliest to taint both life and doctrine, cannot be suppress without the fall of learning, and of all ability in disputation, and that these books of either sort are most and soonest catching to the learned, from whom to the common people what ever is hereticall or dissolute may quickly be convey'd, and that evill manners are as perfectly learnt without books a thousand other ways which cannot be stopt, and evill doctrine not with books can propagate, except a teacher guide, which he might also doe without writing, and so beyond prohibiting, I am not able to unfold, how this cautelous¹²⁵ enterprise of licencing can be exempted from the number of vain and impossible attempts. And he who were pleasantly dispos'd, could not well avoid to lik'n it to the exploit of that gallant man who thought to pound up the crows by shutting his Parkgate. Besides another inconvenience, if learned men be the first receivers out of books, & dispredders both of vice and error, how shall the licensors themselves be confided in, unlesse we can conferr upon

hath advanced all our Popish Bishops. I shall name but some of them, Bishop *Manering*, the Bishop of *Bath and Wells*, the Bishop of *Oxford*, and Bishop *Wren*, the least of all these birds, but one of the most unclean ones. These are the men that should have fed Christ's Flock, but they are the Wolves that have devoured them." Cf. "Lycidas," ll. 128–29.

¹²⁴ Milton's own subsequent conversion to Arminianism (see especially *Christian Doctrine*, I, iv, "On Predestination") lends both force and irony here. Arminius (Jacob Hermanns, 1560–1609) became so famous as professor of theology at the University of Leyden that a movement which was already strong before he joined it was given his name. It began in 1554 when Calvin's erstwhile colleague, Castellion, attacked (from the relative safety of Basle) the forcible imposition of religious uniformity in Geneva (recently exemplified by the burning of Servetus). The main features of his position were general predestination, as opposed to particular; conditional, as opposed to unconditional, election; free will; and toleration of religious diversity. "Bellianism," as Beza called it, flourished in the Netherlands under the leadership of Dirck Coornhert; and Arminius, then an orthodox Calvinist minister at Amsterdam, was, in 1589, called upon to answer some tracts (anonymous, but possibly written by Coornhert) circulating in Delft. His change of view followed, as described by Milton; the movement gained increasing momentum, securing, by 1630, official permission. Its influence in England was not confined to any religious party: Calvinists denounced as Arminian such diverse people as Archbishop Laud and the Independent preacher John Goodwin. (This note is in part based upon J. W. Allen, *History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, pp. 73–102.)

¹²⁵ deceitful, crafty.

them, or they assume to themselves above all others in the Land, the grace of infallibility, and uncorruptednesse? And again if it be true, that a wise man like a good refiner can gather gold out of the drossiest volume, and that a fool will be a fool with [14] the best book, yea or without book, there is no reason that we should deprive a wise man of any advantage to his wisdom, while we seek to restrain from a fool, that which being restrain'd will be no hindrance to his folly. For if there should be so much exactnesse always us'd to keep that from him which is unfit for his reading, we should in the judgement of *Aristotle*¹²⁶ not only, but of *Salomon*,¹²⁷ and of our Saviour,¹²⁸ not voutsafe him good precepts, and by consequence not willingly admit him to good books; as being certain that a wise man will make better use of an idle pamphlet, then a fool will do of sacred Scripture. 'Tis next alleg'd we must not expose our selves to temptations without necessity, and next to that, not imploy our time in vain things.¹²⁹ To both these objections one answer will serve, out of the grounds already laid, that to all men such books are not temptations, nor vanities; but usefull drugs and materialls wherewith to temper and compose effective and strong med'cins, which mans life cannot want.¹³⁰ The rest, as children and childish men, who have not the art to qualifie and prepare these working mineralls, well may be exhorted to forbear, but hinder'd forcibly they cannot be by all the licencing that Sainted¹³¹ Inquisition could ever yet contrive; which is what I promis'd to deliver next, That this order of licencing conduces nothing to the end for which it was fram'd; and hath almost prevented me by being clear already while thus much hath bin explaining. See the ingenuity of Truth, who when she gets a free and willing hand, opens her self faster, then the pace of method and discours can overtake her. It was the task which I began with, To shew that no Nation, or well

¹²⁶ *Ethics*, I, iii; 1095^a (tr. W. D. Ross, in *Introduction to Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon, New York; Modern Library, 1947, p. 310): "Since he tends to follow his passions, his study will be vain and unprofitable."

¹²⁷ Proverbs 23:9: "Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words."

¹²⁸ Matthew 7:6: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine."

¹²⁹ See above, p. 517, n. 109.

¹³⁰ *I.e.*, with which men cannot dispense.

¹³¹ A jibe at the official name adopted by the Inquisition in 1542: "The Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office."

instituted State, if they valu'd books at all, did ever use this way of licencing; and it might be answer'd, that this is a piece of prudence lately discover'd. To which I return, that as it was a thing slight and obvious to think on, so if it had bin difficult to finde out, there wanted not among them long since, who suggested such a cours; which they not following, leave us a pattern of their judgement, that it was not the not knowing, but the not approving, which was the cause of their not using it. *Plato*, a man of high authority indeed, but least of all for his Commonwealth, in the book of his laws,¹³² which no City ever yet receiv'd, fed his fancie with making many edicts to his ayrie Burgomasters, which they who otherwise admire him, wish had bin rather buried and excus'd in the *genial* cups of an *Academick* night-sitting.¹³³ By which laws he seems to tolerat no kind of learning, but by unalterable decree, con-[15]sisting most of practicall traditions, to the attainment whereof a Library of smaller bulk then his own dialogues would be abundant. And there also enacts that no Poet should so much as read to any privat man, what he had writt'n, untill the Judges and Law-keepers had seen it, and allow'd it: But that *Plato* meant this Law peculiarly to that Commonwealth which he had imagin'd, and to no

¹³² The presence in this passage of "Commonwealth," "ayrie Burgomasters," and "his fancied republic, which in this world could have no place" may seem to suggest the *Republic*, which formulates a frankly ideal state, rather than the *Laws*, which aims at the best possible actual state; and "to tolerat no kind of learning, but by unalterable decree" is as readily applicable to the *Republic* (books II and III) as to the *Laws* (book VII). But the rest of the passage makes it clear that the reference is to the *Laws*. The description of tolerated learning as "consisting most of practicall traditions" is accurate only if applied to the *Laws*; "there . . . enacts that no Poet should so much as read to any privat man, what he had writt'n, untill the Judges . . . had . . . allow'd it" is a paraphrase of a passage in *Laws*, VII, 801; finally the statement that the dialogue under examination contributed least to Plato's "authority," and was deprecated by his admirers, can, in view of the respective reputations of the two books, refer only to the *Laws*. The meaning, therefore, of Plato's "Commonwealth, in the book of his laws" is "the state which he depicted in the book entitled the *Laws*," and the utopian nature of the state must be taken as indicating, not Plato's intention, but Milton's opinion of the result.

¹³³ Plato's *Symposium* does not discuss the tenet against which Milton is here arguing. The function of the allusion (the original meaning of "symposium" was an intellectual drinking party, and "*Academick*" is formed from Plato's "Academy") is indirect deprecation, for the reminder of the circumstances of some of Plato's dialogues serves momentarily to give to them all an air of vinous irresponsibility.

other, is evident. Why was he not else a Law-giver to himself, but a transgressor, and to be expell'd by his own Magistrats; both for the wanton epigrams and dialogues which he made,¹³⁴ and his perpetuall reading of *Sophron Mimus*,¹³⁵ and *Aristophanes*, books of grossest infamy, and also for commending the latter of them though he were the malicious libeller of his chief friends, to be read by the Tyrant *Dionysius*,¹³⁶ who had little need of such trash to spend his time on? But that he knew this licencing of Poems had reference and dependence to many other proviso's there set down in his fancied republic, which in this world could have no place: and so neither he himself, nor any Magistrat, or City ever imitated that cours, which tak'n apart from those other collaterall injunctions must needs be vain and fruitlesse. For if they fell upon one kind of strictnesse, unlesse their care were equall to regulat all other things of like aptnes to corrupt the mind, that single endeavour they knew would be but a fond labour; to shut and fortifie one gate against corruption, and be necessitated to leave others round about wide open. If we think to regulat Printing, thereby to rectifie manners, we must regulat all recreations and pastimes, all that is delightfull to man. No musick must be heard, no song be set or sung, but what is grave and *Dorick*.¹³⁷ There must be licencing dancers, that no gesture, motion, or deportment be taught our youth but what by their allowance shall be thought honest; for such *Plato*

¹³⁴ For the epigrams, see Diogenes Laertius, III, 23; the dialogues are probably the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*. Hales (p. 104) and Lockwood (p. 78) feel that "the epithet [wanton] is certainly too violent and unsparing." They have, presumably, the language in mind, which is not wanton; but Milton is thinking of the matter represented: homosexual love. *E.g.*, Shelley's well-known translation of one of the epigrams is entitled "Kissing Helena," and seems unobjectionable if ardent; but in the original epigram the name of the person embraced was Agathon.

¹³⁵ Sophron "Mimus" (fl. fifth century B.C.) was a popular writer of mimes, or realistic dramatic sketches. Milton's authority for Plato's addiction to Sophron is Diogenes Laertius (III, 13), to whom he attributes the story in *An Apology*, *Complete Prose*, I, 879.

¹³⁶ See above, p. 495, n. 34. Aristophanes satirizes Socrates in the *Clouds*, Nicias in the *Knights*.

¹³⁷ *Laws*, VII, contains an extensive discussion of the kinds of music to be permitted and those to be proscribed, but does not give them geographical or national names. Milton draws the term "*Dorick*" from the earlier discussion in *Republic*, III, 398-99, which divides music into four styles, the "relaxed" Lydian and Ionian (to be suppressed), and the more "manly" Dorian and Phrygian (to be permitted). *Cf. Lycidas*, l. 189: "warbling his Doric lay."

to enquire what lectures¹⁴¹ the bagpipe and the rebbeck¹⁴² reads ev'n to the ballatry, and the gammuth of every *municipal* fidler, for these are the Countrymans *Arcadia's*¹⁴³ and his *Monte Mayors*.¹⁴⁴ Next, what more Nationall corruption, for which England hears ill abroad, then houshold gluttony;¹⁴⁵ [16] who shall be the

¹⁴¹ This amplifies the rhetorical effect of "visitors" discussed in note 140. "Lecturers" were ordained ministers, but not members of the parish clergy; they were employed by corporations or individuals to preach and to do nothing more. As they did not have to read the service, they were in an especially favorable position for avoiding conformity, and in fact the Sunday afternoon lecture became the great opportunity of English puritanism. At Laud's instigation Charles placed severe restrictions upon lecturers in 1629, and again in 1633; these were set aside by the House of Commons in 1641 (Gardiner, *History of England*, VII, 130–32 and 303–306, and X, 16). Neal (*History of the Puritans*, I, 593) gives a number of examples of how various bishops dealt with the lecturers; e.g., "Dr. Pierse bishop of Bath and Wells, suppressed all lectures in market-towns, and elsewhere throughout his diocese, alledging *that he saw no such need of preaching now, as was in the apostles days*. . . . All the new bishops went in the same tract; and some of them upon this sad principle, *That afternoon sermons on Sundays, were an impediment to the revels in the evening*."

¹⁴² A rudimentary two-stringed violin; cf. "L'Allegro," l. 94.

¹⁴³ Sir Philip Sidney's prose romance, *The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia* (published 1590, revised edition, 1593) was immensely popular. There is no hostility in this reference; Milton's famous description, five years later, of the *Arcadia* as a "vain amatorious poem" (*Eikonoklastes*, Chapter I) must be taken in context: "a book in that kind full of worth and wit, but among religious thoughts and duties not worthy to be named." See *Complete Prose*, III, for a discussion of this point.

¹⁴⁴ Jorge de Montemayor's *Diana* (published ca. 1559), was the first Spanish prose romance; it started a major literary fashion, and achieved an almost unprecedented European popularity.

¹⁴⁵ For corroboration of this charge, see Mary Bateson in H. D. Traill and J. S. Mann, *Social England* (6 vols., London, 1894–97), IV, 214–36, especially p. 220. Hears ill: Hales (p. 108) cites several parallels for this Englishing of a Greek idiom; e.g., Ben Jonson, in the dedication of *Volpone*, writes that his is "an age wherein poetry and the professors of it hear so ill on all sides."

On the question of drunkenness there would seem to be at first glance a contradiction between *Areopagitica* and *Tetrachordon* (see below, p. 634). *Areopagitica* says that drunkenness (among other things) "will be, and must be," and that wisdom consists not in attempting to eradicate the ineradicable, but in making it "lest hurtful." *Tetrachordon* seems not to agree that drunkenness is ineradicable: "what more foul and common sin among us then drunkennes, and who can bee ignorant, that if the importation of Wine, and the use of all strong drink were forbid, it would both clean ridde the possibility of committing that odious vice, and men might afterwards live happily and healthfully, without the use of those intoxicating licors." But *Tetrachordon* is not advocating prohibition; it goes on to say that drunkenness will not be eradicated because not even the severest and holiest of reformers would think of surrendering his own (per-

rectors of our daily rioting? and what shall be done to inhibit the multitudes that frequent those houses where drunk'nes is sold and harbour'd? Our garments also should be referr'd to the licencing of some more sober work-masters to see them cut into a lesse wanton garb.¹⁴⁶ Who shall regulat all the mixt conversation of our youth, male and female together, as is the fashion of this Country, who shall still appoint what shall be discours'd, what presum'd, and no further? Lastly, who shall forbid and separat all idle resort, all evill company? These things will be, and must be; but how they shall be lest hurtfull, how lest enticing, herein consists the grave and governing wisdom of a State. To sequester out of the world into *Atlantick* and *Eutopian* polities,¹⁴⁷ which never can be drawn into use, will not mend our condition; but to ordain wisely as in this world of evill, in the midd'st whereof God hath plac't us unavoidably. Nor is it *Plato's* licencing of books will doe this, which necessarily pulls along with it so many other kinds of licencing, as will make us all both ridiculous and weary, and yet frustrat; but those unwritt'n, or at least unconstraining laws of vertuous education, religious and civill nurture, which *Plato* there mentions,¹⁴⁸ as the bonds and ligaments of the Commonwealth, the pillars and the sustainers of every writt'n Statute; these they be which will bear chief sway

fectly legitimate) use of drink in order to make impossible its abuse by others. Milton's point is that by common consent and the example of daily life the abuse of a permission does not make the permission invalid, and that the right use of divorce should no more than the right use of wine be abolished because of abuse.

¹⁴⁶ Between 1363 and 1597 there had in fact been a number of sumptuary laws, but of increasingly negligible effect.

¹⁴⁷ *Plato's Critias* purports to give an account of the "Kingdom of Atlantis," an island beyond the Pillars of Hercules that was later sunk into the ocean. Ideal, and hence unattainable, commonwealths are depicted in More's *Utopia* (1516) and Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627). On other occasions Milton could be friendlier to utopian speculation; cf. *An Apology* (*Complete Prose*, I, 881), where he praises "That grave and noble invention which the greatest and sublimest wits in sundry ages, *Plato* in *Critias*, and our two famous countrey-men, the one in his *Utopia*, the other in his *new Atlantis* chose . . . to display the largenesse of their spirits by teaching this our world better and exacter things, then were yet known." Ironically, Milton's own polity would one day be jeered at as utopian; see *The Censure of the Rota Upon Mr. Miltons Book* (1660), E 1019(5*), pp. 13-14.

¹⁴⁸ This is usually taken as an allusion to *Republic*, IV, 424-33, a passage which fits Milton's description; but "there mentions" would suggest that the reference is to *Laws*, I, 643-44; see note 132.

in such matters as these, when all licencing will be easily eluded. Impunity and remissenes, for certain are the bane of a Commonwealth, but here the great art lyes to discern in what the law is to bid restraint and punishment, and in what things perswasion only is to work. If every action which is good, or evill in man at ripe years, were to be under pittance,¹⁴⁹ and prescription, and compulsion, what were vertue but a name, what praise could be then due to well-doing, what grammercy to be sober, just or continent? many there be that complain of divin Providence for suffering *Adam* to transgresse, foolish tongues! when God gave him reason, he gave him freedom to choose, for reason is but choosing; ¹⁵⁰ he had bin else a meer artificiall *Adam*, such an *Adam* as he is in the motions.¹⁵¹ We our selves esteem not of that obedience, or love, or gift, which is of force: God therefore left him free, set before him a provoking object, ever almost in his eyes; herein consisted his merit, herein the right of his reward, the praise of his abstinence. Wherefore did he creat passions within us, pleasures round about us, but that these rightly temper'd are the very ingredients of vertu? They are not skilfull considerers of human things, who [17] imagin to remove sin by removing the matter of sin; for, besides that it is a huge heap increasing under the very act of diminishing, though some part of it may for a time be withdrawn from some persons, it cannot from all, in such a universall thing as books are; and when this is done, yet the sin remains entire. Though ye take from a covetous man all his treasure, he has yet one jewell left, ye cannot bereave him of his covetousnesse. Banish all objects of lust, shut up all youth into the severest discipline that can be exercis'd in any hermitage, ye cannot make them chaste, that came not thither so: such great care and wisdom is requir'd to the right managing of this point. Suppose we could expell sin by this means; look how much we thus expell of sin, so much we expell of vertue: ¹⁵² for the matter of them both is the same; remove that, and ye remove them both alike. This justifies the high providence of God, who

¹⁴⁹ Hales (p. 110) suggests this means "not so much an 'allowance,' as 'allowancing,' i.e., a system of allowance."

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Aristotle, *Ethics*, III, 2; *Paradise Lost*, III, 95–128.

¹⁵¹ Puppet-shows.

¹⁵² Cf. Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici* (London, Everyman Library: 1934), p. 71: "They that endeavour to abolish Vice, destroy also Virtue."

though he command us temperance, justice, continence, yet powrs out before us ev'n to a profusenes all desirable things, and gives us minds that can wander beyond all limit and satiety. Why should we then affect a rigor contrary to the manner of God and of nature, by abridging or scanting those means, which books freely permitted are, both to the triall of vertue, and the exercise of truth. It would be better done to learn that the law must needs be frivolous which goes to restrain things, uncertainly and yet equally working to good, and to evill. And were I the chooser, a dram of well-doing should be preferr'd before many times as much the forcible hindrance of evill-doing. For God sure esteems the growth and compleating of one vertuous person, more then the restraint of ten vitious. And albeit what ever thing we hear or see, sitting, walking, travelling, or conversing may be fitly call'd our book, and is of the same effect that writings are, yet grant the thing to be prohibited were only books, it appears that this order hitherto is far insufficient to the end which it intends. Do we not see, not once or oftner, but weekly that continu'd Court-libell ¹⁵³ against the Parliament and City, Printed, as the wet sheets can witnes, and dispers't among us, for all that licencing can doe? yet this is the prime service a man would think, wherein this order should give proof of it self. If it were executed, you'l say. But certain, if execution be remisse or blindfold now, and in this particular, what will it be hereafter, and in other books. If then the order shall not be vain and frustrat, behold a new labour, Lords and Commons, ye must repeal and proscribe all scandalous and unlicenc't books already printed and divulg'd; after ye have [18] drawn them up into a list, that all may know which are

¹⁵³ *Mercurius Aulicus*, a newspaper published weekly from early 1642 to late 1645, and sporadically for some time thereafter. Established largely to counter the effects of *Mercurius Britanicus* [sic], the Parliamentary newspaper, it was written by Sir John Birkenhead and published at Oxford by the appointment of Charles. Even in areas controlled by Parliament it managed to achieve a wide underground circulation, and, as Milton says, it was reprinted by secret presses within London itself. *The Parliament Scout* . . . Numb. 73, reporting for the period a fortnight before *Areopagitica*'s publication, says (November 14, 1644; E17 [4], p. 585): "*Aulicus* may come through all the Watches, Courts of Guards, and call the Parliament-men Rebels, Traitours, jeer and scoff city, countrey, Clergy, and what not? and he may be suffered within the walls of London, yea, to be reprinted, and disperst in the face of Westminster Hall; and may not a true friend to the Parliament tell his friends and the Parliament the truth . . . ?"

condemn'd, and which not; and ordain that no forrein books be deliver'd out of custody, till they have bin read over.¹⁵⁴ This office will require the whole time of not a few overseers, and those no vulgar men. There be also books which are partly usefull and excellent, partly culpable and pernicious; this work will ask as many more officials,¹⁵⁵ to make expurgations, and expunctions, that the Commonwealth of learning be not damnify'd.¹⁵⁶ In fine, when the multitude of books encrease upon their hands, ye must be fain to catalogue all those Printers who are found frequently offending, and forbidd the importation of their whole suspected *typography*. In a word, that this your order may be exact, and not deficient, ye must reform it perfectly according to the model of *Trent* and *Sevil*,¹⁵⁷ which I know ye abhorre to doe. Yet though ye should condescend to this, which God forbid, the order still would be but fruitlesse and defective to that end whereto ye meant it. If to prevent sects and schisms, who is so unread or so uncatechis'd in story, that hath not heard of many sects refusing books as a hindrance, and preserving their doctrine unmixt for many ages, only by unwritt'n traditions.¹⁵⁸ The Christian faith, for that was once a schism, is not unknown to have spread all over *Asia*, ere any Gospel or Epistle was seen in writing. If the amendment of manners be aym'd

¹⁵⁴ This provision against foreign books was in fact made in section VI of the Star-Chamber Decree of 1637; see Appendix A, below, p. 794.

¹⁵⁵ White (pp. 92–93) has shown how hateful this word was at the time of the *Areopagitica*: "An *official* was the name of the officer in the Ecclesiastical Courts to whom the Bishops deputed the cognizance of spiritual offences. Laud had let them loose over the country." He quotes from *Of Reformation (Complete Prose, I, 543*: "to goe about circl'd with a band of rooking Officials") and cites the title of the Root-and-Branch Bill of 1641 ("a bill for the utter eradication of Bishops, Deans, and Chapters; with all Chancellors, *Officials*, and all officers and other Persons belonging to either of them").

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Sarpi, *Inquisition*, p. 81: "It is a folly to thinke that the Commonwealth may be damnified by the printing of an evill booke, and not if it be printed in another place, and so scattered abroad"; cf. note 154.

¹⁵⁷ See above, p. 493, note 26, and p. 502, n. 61.

¹⁵⁸ One reason this was so widely known was that historians constantly used it to explain inadequacy of documentary evidence. E.g., Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* with Selden's "Illustrations" (1612; Milton appears to have known this: cf. below, p. 551, n. 230) declares (Song X) that the Druids "To letters never would their mysteries commit, / For which the breasts of men they deem'd to be more fit"; and Selden's note compares the Jewish Cabalists, who "until of late time wrote not, but taught and learnt by mouth and diligent hearing of their rabbins."

at, look into Italy and Spain, whether those places be one scruple the better, the honester, the wiser, the chaster, since all the inquisitionall rigor that hath bin executed upon books.

Another reason, whereby to make it plain that this order will misse the end it seeks, consider by the quality which ought to be in every licencer. It cannot be deny'd but that he who is made judge to sit upon the birth, or death of books whether they may be wafted ¹⁵⁹ into this world, or not, had need to be a man above the common measure, both studious, learned, and judicious; there may be else no mean mistakes in the censure of what is passable or not; which is also no mean injury. If he be of such worth as behoovs him, there cannot be a more tedious and unpleasing journey-work, a greater losse of time levied upon his head, then to be made the perpetuall reader of unchosen books and pamphlets, oftentimes huge volumes. There is no book that is acceptable unlesse at certain seasons; but to be enjoyn'd the reading of that at all times, and in a hand scars legible, whereof three pages would not down at any time in the fairest Print, is an imposition which I cannot beleieve how he that values time, and his own [19] studies, or is but of a sensible nostrill should be able to endure. In this one thing I crave leave of the present licensors to be pardon'd for so thinking: who doubtlesse took this office up, looking on it through their obedience to the Parlament, whose command perhaps made all things seem easie and unlaborious to them; but that this short triall hath wearied them out already, their own expressions and excuses to them who make so many journeys to sollicit their licence, are testimony anough. Seeing therefore those who now possesse the imployment, by all evident signs wish themselves well ridd of it, and that no man of worth, none that is not a plain unthrift of his own hours is ever likely to succeed them, except he mean to put himself to the salary of a Presse-corrector, we may easily foresee what kind of licensors we are to expect hereafter, either ignorant, imperious, and remisse, or basely pecuniary. This is what I had to shew wherein this order cannot conduce to that end, whereof it bears the intention.

I lastly proceed from the no good it can do, to the manifest hurt it causes, in being first the greatest discouragement and affront, that can be offer'd to learning and to learned men. It was the com-

¹⁵⁹ The image assumes the mythical river dividing the unborn souls from the living world; see Plato's *Phaedo*, 113.

plaint and lamentation of Prelats, upon every least breath of a motion to remove pluralities, and distribute more equally Church revennu's, that then all learning would be for ever dasht and discourag'd.¹⁶⁰ But as for that opinion, I never found cause to think that the tenth part of learning stood or fell with the Clergy: nor could I ever but hold it for a sordid and unworthy speech of any Churchman who had a competency left him.¹⁶¹ If therefore ye be loath to dishearten utterly and discontent, not the mercenary crew of false pretenders to learning, but the free and ingenuous sort of such as evidently were born to study, and love lerning for it self, not for lucre, or any other end, but the service of God and of truth, and perhaps that lasting fame and perpetuity of praise which God and good men have consented shall be the reward of those whose publisht labours advance the good of mankind, then know, that so far to distrust the judgement & the honesty of one who hath but a common repute in learning, and never yet offended, as not to count him fit to print his mind without a tutor and examiner, lest he should drop a scism, or something of corruption, is the greatest displeasure and indignity to a free and knowing spirit that can be put upon him. What advantage is it to be a man over it is to be a boy at school, if we have only scapt the ferular,¹⁶² to come under the fescu¹⁶³ of an *Imprimatur*? if serious and elaborat writings, as if they were no [20] more then the theam of a Grammar lad under his Pedagogue must not be utter'd¹⁶⁴ without the cursory eyes of a temporizing and extemporizing licencer. He who is not trusted with his own actions, his drift not being known to be evill, and standing to the hazard of law and penalty, has no great argument to think himself reputed in the Commonwealth wherin he was born,

¹⁶⁰ Howard Schultz, *Milton and Forbidden Knowledge*, pp. 288–89, gives a selective bibliography of Episcopalians who advanced this defense of pluralities and Puritans who attacked it.

¹⁶¹ Cf., e.g., *Animadversions*, *Complete Prose*, I, 718–23 (which includes the quotation from “our admired *Spencer*” of *Shepheardes Calendar*, May eclogue, ll. 103–31), and *Church-Government*, *Complete Prose*, I, 855–56. Milton often returned to this point in later years; cf., e.g., *Likeliest Means* (1659), pp. 140–41. The *tenth* part of learning: a glance at tithes.

¹⁶² Ferula is the giant fennel, and, from its use in Roman times, a cane, rod, or other instrument of punishment, especially in school discipline. Ferular is another form of the same word.

¹⁶³ Originally a straw or twig, finally a pointer used as an aid to instruction.

¹⁶⁴ Published.

for other then a fool or a foreiner. When a man writes to the world, he summons up all his reason and deliberation to assist him; he searches, meditates, is industrious, and likely consults and conferrs with his judicious friends; after all which done he takes himself to be inform'd in what he writes, as well as any that writ before him; if in this the most consummat act of his fidelity and ripenesse, no years, no industry, no former proof of his abilities can bring him to that state of maturity, as not to be still mistrusted and suspected, unlesse he carry all his considerat diligence, all his midnight watchings, and expence of *Palladian* ¹⁶⁵ oyl, to the hasty view of an unleasur'd licencer, perhaps much his younger, perhaps far his inferiour in judgement, perhaps one who never knew the labour of book-writing, and if he be not repulst, or slighted, must appear in Print like a punie ¹⁶⁶ with his guardian, and his censors hand on the back of his title to be his bayl and surety, that he is no idiot, or seducer, it cannot be but a dishonor and derogation to the author, to the book, to the priviledge and dignity of Learning. And what if the author shall be one so copious of fancie, as to have many things well worth the adding, come into his mind after licencing, while the book is yet under the Presse, which not seldom happ'ns to the best and diligentest writers; and that perhaps a dozen times in one book. The Printer dares not go beyond his licenc't copy; so often then must the author trudge to his leav-giver, that those his new insertions may be viewd; and many a jaunt will be made, ere that licencer, for it must be the same man, can either be found, or found at leisure; mean while either the Presse must stand still, which is no small damage, or the author loose his accuratest thoughts, & send the book forth wors then he had made it, which to a diligent writer is the greatest melancholy and vexation that can befall. And how can a man teach with authority, which is the life

¹⁶⁵ Pertaining to Pallas Athene, goddess of wisdom. The olive was sacred to her, and she taught man to extract its oil; one of its uses was to feed the lamps by which the devotees of wisdom studied and wrote.

¹⁶⁶ Old French *puis-ne*, after-born; hence a minor. In the schools it meant, technically, a freshman (*NED*, B2), but might be applied to one whose status had not advanced with his years, which is Milton's meaning here; *cf.* Thomas Grantham, *A Discourse in Derision of the Teaching in Free-Schooles* (July 1, 1644), E53(7), p. 8: "Very few of our Gentry are Schollers, for at fourteen or fifteen the bloud growes hot, and they scorn a yoak, and then they are but punies, in the Common-Schooles, under the lowest or second Usher."

of teaching, how can he be a Doctor in his book as he ought to be, or else had better be silent, whenas all he teaches, all he delivers, is but under the tuition, under the correction of his patriarchal¹⁶⁷ licencer to blot or alter¹⁶⁸ what precisely accords not with the hide-bound humor which he calls his judgement. When every a-[21] cute reader upon the first sight of a pedantick licence, will be ready with these like words to ding the book a coits distance from him, I hate a pupil teacher, I endure not an instructor that comes to me under the wardship of an overseeing fist. I know nothing of the

¹⁶⁷ There is a pun here, giving yet another implicit comparison of the Licensing Order with Laud's administration of the Church. There was a widespread belief that Laud had labored to return England to the Roman Catholic Church, the price to be the erection of a Patriarchate of the Western Church, with himself first in office. See, e.g., *A True Delineation, or other Parallel, between Cardinal Wolsey, Arch-bishop of York, and Wm. Laud, Arch-bishop of Canterbury* (1641; in *Somers Tracts*, IV, 434): "They both favored the See of Rome and respected his holinesse in it: the Cardinal did professe it publickly, the Arch-bishop did professe it privately. The Cardinal's ambition was to be Pope: the Arch-bishop strove to be Patriarch: they both bid fairly for it; yet lost their aime." Cf. *Of Reformation, Complete Prose*, I, 529: "And doutles, when ever the *Pope* shall fall, . . . the *Bishops* . . . will leave him, and fall to scrambling, catch who may, hee a Patriarch-dome, and another what comes next hand; as the French Cardinall of late, and the *See of Canterbury* hath plainly affected." At Laud's trial some months before *Areopagitica*, one charge was that he had attempted "to reconcile the church of *England* with the church of *Rome*" and "agreeably to this he assumed to himself the title of PATRIARCH, or pope of *Great Britain*, *alterius orbis papa*." See Neal, *History of the Puritans*, II, 154. See following note.

¹⁶⁸ Milton's charge is that the licensers not merely deleted but even changed what they did not approve. Since this was one of the charges the House of Commons had brought against Laud (see Neal, II, 149-151), it strongly reinforces the allusion implicit in "patriarchal"; see preceding note. James Howell tells of an incident that took place sometime between 1643 and 1646. The printer Richard Heron (or Hearne) took a thirty-year-old sermon of the late Thomas Brightman "to him who was appointed by the *Synod* to license for the Press peeces of that nature, to get an *Imprimatur*, but the *Synodical* man having kept the Sermon above three daies by him, the Printer went for his Sermon, and found it formally licenc'd for the Press, but most pittifully *falsify'd*, *interlin'd* and *adulterated* in many places; For whereas the opinion of *Brightman* throughout the whole Sermon, was, that a National and General Covenant was agreeable to the Word of God, Provided, *the King did give his Royall assent thereunto, without which it was both detestable and damnable*; The holy *Synodical* man had expunged the word *King* every where, and foisted in the room of it, sometimes the word *Parlement*, sometimes the *Trustees of the Common wealth*; sometimes the *men in Authority*. . . . I saw the said Sermon, and the maner how it was so basely sophisticated" (*Philanglus*, 1655; quoted by W. M. Clyde, "Parliament and the Press," *The Library*, Fourth Series, XIII [1932], 413-14).

licencer, but that I have his own hand here for his arrogance; who shall warrant me his judgement? The State Sir, replies the Stationer, but has a quick return, The State shall be my governours, but not my criticks; they may be mistak'n in the choice of a licencer, as easily as this licencer may be mistak'n in an author: This is some common stuffe; and he might adde from Sir *Francis Bacon*, That *such authoriz'd books are but the language of the times*.¹⁶⁹ For though a licencer should happ'n to be judicious more then ordnary, which will be a great jeopardy of the next succession, yet his very office, and his commission enjoyns him to let passe nothing but what is vulgarly receiv'd already. Nay, which is more lamentable, if the work of any deceased author, though never so famous in his life time, and even to this day, come to their hands for licence to be Printed, or Reprinted, if there be found in his book one sentence of a ventrous edge, utter'd in the height of zeal, and who knows whether it might not be the dictat of a divine Spirit, yet not suiting with every low decrepit humor of their own, though it were *Knox* himself, the Reformer of a Kingdom that spake it, they will not pardon him their dash: the sense of that great man shall to all posterity be lost, for the fearfulness, or the presumptuous rashness of a perfunctory licencer. And to what an author¹⁷⁰ this violence hath bin lately done, and in what book of greatest consequence to be faithfully publisht, I could now instance, but shall forbear till a more convenient season. Yet if these things be not resented seriously and timely by them who have the remedy in their power, but that such iron moulds as these shall have authority to knaw out the choisest periods of exquisitest books, and to commit such a treacherous fraud against the orphan remainders of worthiest men after

¹⁶⁹ *An Advertisement Touching the Controversies of the Church of England*; James Spedding, *Letters and Life of Francis Bacon* (3 vols., London: 1861), I, 78. The preceding part of this sentence is quoted later; see below, p. 542, n. 193. Cf. also *Animadversions, Complete Prose*, I, 668. Bacon wrote this piece for private circulation in 1589, at the height of the Admonition controversy; it was first published as *A Wise and Moderate Discourse Concerning Church-Affaires*, in 1640 (as Spedding thought) or 1641. See introduction, *Complete Prose*, I, 22–28.

¹⁷⁰ Identity uncertain; White (pp. 106–108) suggests Edward Coke, Part II of whose *Institutes*, posthumously published by Parliamentary warrant in 1641, was widely understood to have undergone mutilation; or possibly Knox, from whose *History of the Reformation in Scotland* (pub. 1584) several passages were expunged in the 1644 edition.

death, the more sorrow will belong to that haples race of men, whose misfortune it is to have understanding. Henceforth let no man care to learn, or care to be more then worldly wise; for certainly in higher matters to be ignorant and slothfull, to be a common stedfast dunce will be the only pleasant life, and only in request.

And as it is a particular disesteem of every knowing person alive, and most injurious to the writt'n labours and monuments of the dead, so to me it seems an undervaluing and vilifying of the whole Nation. I [22] cannot set so light by all the invention, the art, the wit, the grave and solid judgement which is in England, as that it can be comprehended in any twenty¹⁷¹ capacities how good soever, much lesse that it should not passe except their superintendence be over it, except it be sifted and strain'd with their strainers, that it should be uncurrant without their manuall stamp. Truth and understanding are not such wares as to be monopoliz'd¹⁷² and traded in by tickets and statutes, and standards.¹⁷³ We must not

¹⁷¹ This gives the impression that there were twenty licensers (*cf.* also below, p. 558, n. 257). The list announced by Parliament six days after the Licensing Order totals thirty-four, not including the Parliamentary Committee for Printing (Siebert, *Freedom of the Press in England 1476-1776*, pp. 187-88). It is possible that they had been reduced to twenty by November, 1644, but I can find no record to suggest it.

¹⁷² Another word associating the Licensing Order with a widely detested feature of Charles' reign. Commodity monopolies were abolished (except for new inventions) in 1624, but were prominent among the illegal exactions into which Charles was led by his determination to rule without Parliament. Considerable attention was paid them by Parliament's *Grand Remonstrance* of 1641 (see articles 27 and 115-19; Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents*, pp. 212 and 221-22; see also *Complete Prose*, I, 171-73). *Cf.* below, notes 205 and 259.

¹⁷³ Tickets: Here probably certificates of special trading prerogatives (*NED* quotes Greene's *James IV*, III, ii, "I am the king's purveyor. . . . Here's my ticket") rather than, as usually glossed, acknowledgements for goods obtained on credit. Such a special authorization would automatically entail restrictions on those not so authorized; *e.g.*, goods loaded or unloaded at the London quays could in the seventeenth century be handled only by "Ticket Porters," a body of men licensed by the City Corporation, whose numbers were limited and whose right to do the work was a jealously guarded monopoly. statutes: This may refer to bonds given to creditors (statutes merchant, statutes staple) or possibly, in view of the phrase in the following sentence, "to mark and licence it like our broad cloath," to certain kinds of cloth, of breadth fixed by statute; but more probably it means such statutes of the realm as either impose the special restrictions upon trade involved in monopolies and tickets, or enforce fixed standards of measurement (*NED* quotes Bacon's *Henry VII*, p. 101, "There was also a Statute, for the dispersing of the Standard of the Exchequer, throughout England; thereby to size Weights and Measures").

think to make a staple commodity¹⁷⁴ of all the knowledge in the Land, to mark and licence it like our broad cloath, and our wooll packs. What is it but a servitude like that impos'd by the Philistims, not to be allow'd the sharpning of our own axes and coulthers,¹⁷⁵ but we must repair from all quarters to twenty licencing forges. Had any one writt'n and divulg'd erroneous things & scandalous to honest life, misusing and forfeiting the esteem had of his reason among men, if after conviction this only censure were adjudg'd him, that he should never henceforth write, but what were first examin'd by an appointed officer, whose hand should be annext to passe his credit for him, that now he might be safely read, it could not be apprehended lesse then a disgracefull punishment. Whence to include the whole Nation, and those that never yet thus offended, under such a diffident and suspectfull prohibition, may plainly be understood what a disparagement it is. So much the more, when as dettors and delinquents may walk abroad without a keeper,¹⁷⁶ but unoffensive books must not stirre forth without a visible jaylor in thir title. Nor is it to the common people lesse then a reproach; for if we be so jealous over them, as that we dare not trust them with an English pamphlet, what doe we but censure them for a giddy, vitious, and ungrounded people; in such a sick and weak estate of faith and discretion, as to be able to take nothing down

¹⁷⁴ staple commodity: *NED*: "An article of merchandise the trade in which is subjected to the regulations of the Staple" (the town or place or body of merchants possessing royal authority to control a particular traffic).

¹⁷⁵ I Samuel 13:19–20.

¹⁷⁶ Debtors were, of course, jailed if caught on unprivileged ground; but the precincts of the dissolved monasteries were sanctuaries where they could live unmolested, and "Alsatias" like Blackfriars and St. Martin le Grand swarmed with them (see 8 & 9 William III *cap* XXVII). Even imprisoned debtors might enjoy considerable liberty, since the "rules" of some debtors' prisons (*e.g.*, the Marshalsea) included whole streets of ordinary houses where, if the keeper consented, a prisoner could maintain a pretty ordinary life. Delinquents: On March 27, 1643, Parliament had declared all who had assisted the king to be "delinquents," sequestered their property, and made them liable to imprisonment; but on January 30, 1644, it offered pardon to those who submitted before a certain date, and permitted them to compound for their confiscated estates by paying an assessment (usually about two years' revenue). See Gardiner, *Civil War*, I, 116 and 353, and III, 7. Milton's brother Christopher appears to have experienced both the original and the milder ordinances; see French, *Life Records*, II, 92, 99, 103, 109. Contemporary records are full of compositions only partially paid; perhaps this is what Milton means by delinquents walking abroad.

but through the pipe of a licencer. That this is care or love of them, we cannot pretend, whenas in those Popish places where the Laity are most hated and dispis'd the same strictnes is us'd over them. Wisdom we cannot call it, because it stops but one breach of licence, nor that neither; whenas those corruptions which it seeks to prevent, break in faster at other dores which cannot be shut.

And in conclusion it reflects to the disrepute of our Ministers also, of whose labours we should hope better, and of the proficiencie which thir flock reaps by them, then that after all this light of the Gospel which is, and is to be, and all this continuall preaching, they [23] should be still frequented with such an unprincip'l'd, unedify'd, and laick rabble,¹⁷⁷ as that the whiffe of every new pamphlet should stagger them out of thir catechism, and Christian walking. This may have much reason to discourage the Ministers when such a low conceit is had of all their exhortations, and the benefiting of their hearers, as that they are not thought fit to be turn'd loose to three sheets of paper without a licencer, that all the Sermons, all the Lectures preacht, printed, vented in such numbers, and such volumes, as have now wellnigh made all other books unsalable, should not be armor anough against one single *enchiridion*,¹⁷⁸ without the castle St. Angelo¹⁷⁹ of an *Imprimatur*.

And lest som should perswade ye, Lords and Commons, that these arguments of lerned mens discouragement at this your order, are meer flourishes, and not reall, I could recount what I have seen and heard in other Countries, where this kind of inquisition tyrannizes; when I have sat among their lerned men, for that honor I had, and bin counted happy to be born in such a place of *Philosophic* freedom, as they suppos'd England was, while themselvs did nothing but bemoan the servil condition into which lerning amongst

¹⁷⁷ Another anti-Laudian echo; one of the most emotion-charged complaints against Laud was that he sought to reduce the laity to a wholly passive role in the church. Milton voiced a representative Puritan view when he argued (*Reason of Church-Government, Complete Prose*, I, 838) that the people were "not now any more to be separated in the Church by vails and partitions as laicks and unclean, but admitted to wait upon the tabernacle as the rightfull Clergy of Christ, a chosen generation, a royal Priesthood."

¹⁷⁸ A pun exploiting both meanings of *enchiridion*: hand-knife and hand-book.

¹⁷⁹ Although the castle of St. Angelo was originally an imperial mausoleum and in Milton's time a papal prison, it was an appropriate symbol of a fortress, having been decisive in Belisarius' victorious defense of Rome against the great siege of Vitiges (537-538).

them was brought; that this was it which had damp't the glory of Italian wits; that nothing had bin there writt'n now these many years but flattery and fustian. There it was that I found and visited the famous *Galileo*¹⁸⁰ grown old, a prisner to the Inquisition, for thinking in Astronomy otherwise then the Franciscan and Dominican licensors thought. And though I knew that England then¹⁸¹ was groaning loudest under the Prelaticall yolk, neverthelesse I took it as a pledge of future happines, that other Nations were so perswaded of her liberty. Yet was it beyond my hope that those Worthies were then breathing in her air, who should be her leaders

¹⁸⁰ In 1632 the great physicist and astronomer (1564–1642) published his *Dialogue on the Two Chief Systems*, which confirmed the Copernican cosmology. He was forced to recant by the Inquisition, which thereafter kept him imprisoned in the Villa Martinelli, near Florence. S. B. Liljegren (*Studies in Milton*, Lund, 1918, pp. 3–36) charged that Milton merely invented this visit. His argument is based on two contentions: that such a visit would have been almost impossible, and that Milton is not a credible witness. The first has been disposed of by the work of three scholars: Marjorie Nicolson ("Milton and the Telescope," *ELH*, II [1935], pp. 1–32, especially 8–10), who showed that, besides the relatives and known friends allowed by Liljegren, Galileo had other visitors (the records of at least four during the period 1638–1641 being extant), and that the editor of the official national edition of his works, writing after Liljegren, continues to believe the meeting took place; and James H. Hanford (*John Milton, Englishman* [New York: Crown, 1949], pp. 79–81) and D. C. Dorian (*The English Diodatis* [New Brunswick: Rutgers U. Press, 1950], pp. 172–73), who showed how suitable were Milton's connections, and how good his opportunities, for arranging such a meeting. As for Milton's alleged unreliability as a witness, Liljegren's argument is as follows. (1) Milton gave an account of his Italian journey in the *Second Defence* and did not repeat his claim to have met Galileo. Inference: the *Second Defence*, being in Latin, would be understood by Italians in a position to know the facts; therefore Milton decided against repeating the Galileo story. (2) Also in the *Second Defence*, Milton referred to some great men who were blind and did not include Galileo. Inference: Milton was unaware that Galileo had gone blind, and (since this occurred before Milton's European tour) had therefore not met him. (3) Milton planted the famous "Pamela prayer" in the *Eikon Basilike* (see Vol. III). Inference: Milton was a dishonest man. What is serious in all this is the charge that Milton forged the Pamela prayer, and it has been finally disproved by F. F. Madan, *A New Bibliography of the Eikon Basilike* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1950), pp. 120–21; cf. also M. Y. Hughes, "New Evidence on the Charge That Milton Forged the Pamela Prayer," *Review of English Studies*, n.s. III (1952), pp. 130–40. All that is left, then, of Liljegren's famous attack is just what Bernhardt had observed some forty years earlier: that it was surprising that Milton did not, in 1654, make the use that might have been expected of the man he had met in 1638 (Wilhelm Bernhardt, *John Miltons Politische Hauptschriften* [3 vols., Berlin, 1876], II, 215–16).

¹⁸¹ Milton's European tour took place in 1638–1639.

to such a deliverance, as shall never be forgott'n by any revolution of time that this world hath to finish. When that was once begun, it was as little in my fear, that what words of complaint I heard among lerned men of other parts utter'd against the Inquisition, the same I should hear by as lerned men at home utterd in time of Parlament against an order of licencing; and that so generally, that when I had disclos'd my self a companion of their discontent, I might say, if without envy, that he whom an honest *quaestorship* had indear'd to the *Sicilians*,¹⁸² was not more by them importun'd against *Verres*, then the favourable opinion which I had among many who honour ye, and are known and respected by ye, [24] loaded me with entreaties and perswasions; that I would not despair to lay together that which just reason should bring into my mind, toward the removal of an undeserved thraldom upon lerning. That this is not therefore the disburdning of a particular fancie, but the common grievance of all those who had prepar'd their minds and studies above the vulgar pitch to advance truth in others, and from others to entertain it, thus much may satisfie. And in their name I shall for neither friend nor foe conceal what the generall murmur is; that if it come to inquisitioning again, and licencing, and that we are so timorous of our selvs, and so suspicious of all men, as to fear each book, and the shaking of every leaf, before we know what the contents are, if some who but of late were little better then silenc't from preaching, shall come now to silence us from reading, except what they please, it cannot be guest what is intended by som but a second tyranny over learning: and will soon put it out of controversie that Bishops and Presbyters are the same to us both name and thing.¹⁸³ That those evils of Prelaty which be-

¹⁸² Cicero was quaestor in Sicily in 75 B.C. Verres was praetor there, 73-71 B.C. It was in indictment of the latter's extortions that Cicero composed his Verrine Orations; only the first two were delivered, after which Verres went into exile.

¹⁸³ An ironical history underlies this line of attack. On the one hand, it had always been a basic Puritan contention that the hierarchical structure of the Church of England was invalid, since there was nothing to indicate that the Gospel recognized a third ecclesiastical order besides priest (for which "bishop" and "presbyter" were synonyms) and deacon; thus, in *Of Prelatical Episcopacy*, Milton provided an elaborate philological, exegetical, and historical argument to show (*Complete Prose*, I, 650) that "a Bishop and *Presbyter* is all one both in name, and office." On the other hand, the defenders of Episcopacy had always contended that Presbyterianism would vest tyrannical power in each minister. Thus Bishop Hall warned (*Episcopacie by Divine Right*, 1640; *Works*, ed. Philip

fore from five or six and twenty Sees were distributivly charg'd upon the whole people, will now light wholly upon learning, is not obscure to us: whenas now the Pastor of a small unlearned Parish, on the sudden shall be exalted Archbishop over a large dioces of books, and yet not remove, but keep his other cure too, a mysticall pluralist. He who but of late cry'd down the sole ordination of every novice Batchelor of Art, and deny'd sole jurisdiction over the simplest Parishioner,¹⁸⁴ shall now at home in his privat chair assume both these over worthiest and excellentest books and ablest authors that write them. This is not, Yee Covnants¹⁸⁵ and Protestations¹⁸⁶

Wynter [10 vols., London, 1863], IX, 270) against setting up "a pope and his conclave of cardinals within his own parish," and Sir Thomas Aston (*A Remonstrance against Presbitery* [1641, E163 (1)], p. 250) pictured the Presbyterian minister as "the little Bishop, absolute Pope of every parish." Milton's bitter jest thus means that the controversy about whether "bishop" and "presbyter" mean the same thing will soon end, since the conduct of the Presbyterian divines confirms simultaneously both the Episcopalian argument from consequences (that they will prove petty tyrants) and the Puritan argument from definition (that they are the same as bishops). Compare the pun in the sonnet *con coda* of a year or two later: "*New Presbyter* is but *Old Priest* writ large" (the etymology of "priest" is a series of elisions from "presbyter"). See introduction, above, pp. 109, 123-24, 129-30.

¹⁸⁴ The bishops' claim to possess the sole right to ordain ministers and to exercise spiritual jurisdiction within their dioceses had, of course, been strongly contested by the Presbyterians. Milton illustrates the Presbyterian position on both points in *Animadversions*, section XIII (*Complete Prose*, I, 710 ff.); his more extensive discussion of jurisdiction in *Reason of Church-Government* (*Complete Prose*, I, 830 ff.) has moved somewhat to the left of Presbyterian orthodoxy.

¹⁸⁵ The Scots' National Covenant (February 28, 1638) formalized the Presbyterian resistance to the effort of Charles and Laud to impose Episcopacy on Scotland. This became the basis of the Solemn League and Covenant between England and Scotland (ratified by Parliament September 25, 1643, and ordered for subscription for all Englishmen February 5, 1644), which was, in effect, a treaty bringing a Scottish army to the assistance of the Long Parliament. It undertook to abolish Episcopacy and reform religion in the Church of England. Whether or not the Licensing Order was consistent with its terms was a matter of interpretation (and interpretation of the Covenant was to become fiercely divisive in the following years); certainly, despite Milton's view, it was consistent with the intent at the time of the treaty of the Scots and of the Presbyterian majority in the Parliament that promulgated it. For a fuller discussion see introduction, above, pp. 53-54, 57-65.

¹⁸⁶ At the beginning of May, 1641, Charles, despairing of other means to protect Strafford, prepared to use force against Parliament. One of Parliament's defensive measures was the Protestation (May 3-4), taken by members of both Houses and subscribed by many citizens, which undertook to defend, besides religion, Crown, and Parliament, "the lawful rights and liberties of the subjects";

that we have made, this is not to put down Prelaty, this is but to chop¹⁸⁷ an Episcopacy, this is but to translate the Palace *Metropolitan* from one kind of dominion into another, this is but an old canonicall slight of *commuting* our penance.¹⁸⁸ To startle thus sometimes at a meer unlicenc't pamphlet will after a while be afraid of every conventicle, and a while after will make a conventicle of every Christian meeting. But I am certain that a State govern'd by the rules of justice and fortitude, or a Church built and founded upon the rock of faith and true knowledge, cannot be so pusillanimous. While things are yet not constituted in Religion,¹⁸⁹ that freedom of writing should be restrain'd by a discipline imitated from the Prelats, and learnt by them from the Inquisition to shut us up all again into the brest of a licencer, must needs give cause of doubt and [25] discouragement to all learned and religious men. Who cannot but discern the finenes of this politic drift, and who are the contrivers; that while Bishops were to be baited down, then all Presses might be open; it was the peoples birthright and priviledge in time of Parlament, it was the breaking forth of light. But now the Bishops abrogated and voided out of the Church, as if our Reformation sought no more, but to make room for others into their seats under another name, the Episcopall arts begin to bud again, the cruse of truth must run no more oyle,¹⁹⁰ liberty of Printing must be enthrall'd again under a Prelaticall commission of twenty, the privilege of the people nullify'd, and which is wors, the freedom of learning must see Gardiner, *History of England*, IX, 354. As in the case of the Covenant, the consistency of the Licensing Order with the Protestation is a matter of interpretation.

¹⁸⁷ *NED* (v.2.7.) cites this passage and defines "chop" as "to change" (*i.e.*, alter), explaining that "the meaning of 'change' [from 'chop and change'] passes over into *chop* alone"; but the context suggests rather the earlier meaning "to exchange" (*i.e.*, barter).

¹⁸⁸ One of the charges against Laud was that he took "several large sums of money by way of composition for fines in the high commission court, making use of the method of *commutation*." Laud replied that the money had gone to repair "the west end of St. Paul's," and "he thought it his duty to get as much money for so good a work as he could, even by way of *commutation* for certain crimes." See Neal, *History of the Puritans*, II, 129.

¹⁸⁹ The Assembly of Divines (Westminster Assembly), whose task it was to advise Parliament on a settlement of the Church, was still, at the time of writing, debating the matter; its famous *Confession of Faith* was not in its entirety submitted to Parliament until December 7, 1646. See introduction, above, pp. 61-72, 92-107.

¹⁹⁰ See I Kings 17:9-16.

groan again, and to her old fetters; all this the Parliament yet sitting.¹⁹¹ Although their own late arguments and defences against the Prelats might remember them that this obstructing violence meets for the most part with an event utterly opposite to the end which it drives at: instead of suppressing sects and schisms, it raises them and invests them with a reputation: ¹⁹² *The punishing of wits enhaunces their authority, saith the Vicount St. Albans, and a forbidd'n writing is thought to be a certain spark of truth that flies up in the faces of them who seeke to tread it out.*¹⁹³ This order therefore may

¹⁹¹ Cf. Henry Robinson, *John the Baptist* (September 23, 1644), E9(13), pp. 23–24: "Had it not been for that blessed liberty of Printing which this Kingdome has enjoyed some two or three yeares together after the first sitting of this Parliament, we had yet remained in ignorance of much saving truth, and amongst other mischiefes beene still as deeply engaged for Episcopacie, as ever; but since God thereby has already given so great a blessing to us, as an earnest of his greater bounty hereafter, why doe we stifle it in the birth? . . . If . . . Presbytery be Gospel prooffe, why is it afraid to come to triall? . . . the necessity of suffering erroneous opinions to be published, lest truth thereby should be stifled, is so cleare and necessary to the eye of reason, as it is for him that hath lost any thing, to seek it where it is not, as well as where it is." See introduction, above, pp. 87–88.

¹⁹² Cf. Walwyn's *Compassionate Samaritane*, pp. 17–23, for a close parallel to this double argument, simultaneously warning the Presbyterians of their danger and impugning their motives: "A compulsion is of all wayes the most unlikely to beget unity of mind, and uniformity in practise, which experience will make evident. For, The Fines, Imprisonments, Pillories, Banishments, &c. used by the Bishops as meanes to unite, rather confirmed men in their judgements, and begot the abomination and *odium* which these times have cast upon the Hierarchy. . . . And therefore in these times men should consider what they doe. For if they who have the publique countenance doe beare themselves after the same manner towards [those] . . . that cannot comply with them in judgement or practise . . . what can we judge of them but that their ends and intentions are the same with the Bishops? . . . Now . . . men doe speake very strangly, some say the tyrannie over conscience that was exercised by the Bishops, is like to be continued by the Presbyter: that the oppressors are only changed, but the oppression not like to be removed. . . . Nay some say further, that they did well indeede in being so zealous against the Bishops, those Drones and Caterpillers of the Common wealth, in making deservedly odious to the people their oppressive Courts, Fines, Censures, and imprisonments. But they beginne to feare that some bad ends of their owne were aimed [at] herein, and not so much the liberty of the people, [as that] they might get up into the chaire and become to them instead of a Lord Bishop, a ruling Presbytery" (bracketed inserts are from the second edition, pp. 12–19; in Haller, *Tracts*, III, 61 ff.). For a discussion of this pamphlet and evidence that Milton knew it, see introduction, above, pp. 84–87.

¹⁹³ See above, p. 534, n. 169. Milton knew that Bacon took the first epigram from Tacitus (see above, p. 499, n. 51), but Bacon's contemporary prestige made his the more useful name to invoke.

prove a nursing mother to sects, but I shall easily shew how it will be a step-dame to Truth: and first by disinabling us to the maintenance of what is known already.

Well knows he who uses to consider, that our faith and knowledge thrives by exercise, as well as our limbs and complexion. Truth is compar'd in Scripture to a streaming fountain; ¹⁹⁴ if her waters flow not in a perpetuall progression, they sick'n into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition.¹⁹⁵ A man may be a heretick in the truth; and if he beleieve things only because his Pastor sayes so, or the Assembly ¹⁹⁶ so determines, without knowing other reason, though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds, becomes his here-sie.¹⁹⁷ There is not any burden that som would gladlier post off to another, then the charge and care of their Religion. There be, who knows not that there be of Protestants and professors ¹⁹⁸ who live and dye in as arrant an implicit faith,¹⁹⁹ as any lay Papist of

¹⁹⁴ This is usually taken to be a reference to Psalm 85:11 ("Truth shall spring out of the earth"), but Milton may be thinking of the allegorical interpretation of the Song of Solomon 4:15 ("a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters").

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Robinson's *Liberty of Conscience*, sig. a1: "there is no *medium* between an implicate faith, and that which a mans owne judgement and understanding leads him to." See introduction, above, pp. 83–84, for a discussion of this pamphlet and evidence that Milton knew it; also note 21 above.

¹⁹⁶ See above, p. 541, n. 189.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Walwyn's *Compassionate Samaritane*, pp. 41–42: "If we must beleieve as the Synod would have us, what is this but to be brought into their miserable condition that must beleive as the Church beleives, and so become, (as said an honest man,) not the Disciples of Christ, but of the Synod?" See introduction, above, pp. 84–87.

¹⁹⁸ *NED* defines this to include anyone who "makes open profession of religion," but by 1644 the word had become restricted to Puritans.

¹⁹⁹ The medieval church distinguished between the "explicit faith" required of the higher clergy (acceptance of the doctrines of the church with a clear understanding of their nature and grounds) and the "implicit faith" which would suffice for the lower clergy and the laity (acceptance of the same doctrines on the authority of the church). In periods of ecclesiastical rigor and inquisition the second category naturally became a general refuge, and so attracted the special hostility of the reformers; e.g., Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, III, ii, 2–3, tr. Henry Beveridge (3 vols.: Edinburgh, 1865), II, 97–98: "They have invented the fiction of implicit faith, with which name decking the grossest ignorance, they delude the wretched populace to their great destruction. . . . Is it faith to understand nothing, and merely submit your convictions implicitly to the Church? . . . Faith consists in the knowledge of God and Christ, . . . not in reverence for the Church. And we see what a labyrinth they have formed out of this implicit faith—every thing, sometimes even the most monstrous errors, being received by the ignorant as oracles without any dis-

Loretto.²⁰⁰ A wealthy man²⁰¹ addicted to his pleasure and to his profits, finds Religion to be a traffick so entangl'd, and of so many piddling accounts, that of all mysteries²⁰² he cannot skill to keep a stock going upon that trade. What should he doe? fain he would have the name to be religious, fain he would bear up with his neighbours in that. What does he therefore, but resolv's to give over toy-[26]ling, and to find himself out som factor, to whose care and credit he may commit the whole managing of his religious affairs; som Divine of note and estimation that must be. To him he adheres, resigns the whole ware-house of his religion, with all the locks and keyes into his custody; and indeed makes the very person of that man his religion; esteems his associating with him a sufficient evidence and commendatory of his own piety. So that a man may say his religion is now no more within himself, but is becom a dividuall movable, and goes and comes neer him, according as that good man frequents the house. He entertains him, gives him gifts, feasts him, lodges him; his religion comes home at night, praies, is liberally supt, and sumptuously laid to sleep, rises, is saluted, and after the malmsey, or some well spic't bruage, and better breakfasted then he whose morning appetite would have gladly fed on green figs between *Bethany* and *Jerusalem*,²⁰³ his Religion walks abroad at eight,

crimination, provided they are prescribed to them under the name of the Church. This inconsiderate facility, though the surest precipice to destruction, is, however, excused on the ground that it believes nothing definitely, but only with the appended condition, If such is the faith of the Church." In *Animadversions* (*Complete Prose*, I, 728) Milton had accused the English Episcopacy of trying to cheat Protestants "into a blind and implicate obedience," and to the end of his life he argued that censorship and enforced conformity produce "that Papistical implicit faith which we all disclaim," while permission of argument and diversity "must needs conduce much . . . to the general confirmation of unimplicit truth." See *Of True Religion* (1673), p. 16.

²⁰⁰ The popularity of this shrine was due to the presence within the cathedral of a structure reputed to be the house in which Mary was born and Jesus conceived, conveyed from Nazareth by angels in 1291. The belief was authorized by successive popes, and finally became institutionalized in the Feast of the Translation of the Holy House (see *Catholic Encyclopedia*). It was for long a favorite target for Protestant witticism.

²⁰¹ This passage (to the end of the paragraph) has been discussed in relation to the character-writing of the revolutionary period by Benjamin Boyce, *The Polemic Character 1640-1661* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955). pp. 24, 85-86, and 94.

²⁰² Mysteries: Crafts, trades, and professions.

²⁰³ Matthew 21:17-19; Mark 11:12-14.

and leavs his kind entertainer in the shop trading all day without his religion.

Another sort there be who when they hear that all things shall be order'd, all things regulated and setl'd; nothing writt'n but what passes through the custom-house of certain Publicans ²⁰⁴ that have the tunaging and the poundaging ²⁰⁵ of all free spok'n truth, will strait give themselvs up into your hands, mak'em, & cut'em out what religion ye please; there be delights, there be recreations and jolly pastimes that will fetch the day about from sun to sun, and rock the tedious year as in a delightfull dream. What need they torture their heads with that which others have tak'n so strictly, and so unalterably into their own pourveying.²⁰⁶ These are the fruits which a dull ease and cessation of our knowledge will bring forth among the people. How goodly, and how to be wisht were such an obedient unanimity as this, what a fine conformity would it starch us all into? doubtles a stanch and solid peece of frame-work, as any January could freeze together.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Here, tax collectors.

²⁰⁵ Another effort to associate the Licensing Order with an unpopular feature of Charles' administration. The main revenue producer in the customs was a form of tariff known as tunnage and poundage. In the first session of a new reign, Parliament had traditionally granted it for the king's lifetime, but refused to do so on the accession of Charles, whose subsequent attempts to collect it on his own authority became one of the most persistent and irritating of the grievances disturbing the country before the convening of the Long Parliament; the *Grand Remonstrance* said it was "without colour or pretence of law." See Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents*, pp. 210-11; cf. above, p. 535, n. 172, and below, p. 559, n. 259. On June 22, 1641, Charles gave his consent to a bill declaring it illegal for the king to levy customs duties without parliamentary consent. The "modernization" of *tunage* to *tonnage* in most editions betrays a misconception of the nature of the tariff: it was a tax of three shillings on each tun (barrel) of wine and one shilling in the pound on the value (not weight) of other goods.

²⁰⁶ Cf. Robinson, *Liberty of Conscience*, sig. a1: "Such will be found carelesse, if not negligent, in the choice of their Religion, as little troubling themselves to *trie the spirits whether they be of God or no*, 1 John 4.1. or examine the opinions and doctrines which are taught, receive them currantly, what ever they be, so they come sealed and delivered by authority of State. . . . To be of a Religion because it is countenanced by the law in that Countrey where thou livest, or because most men are of the same, is no good reason." See introduction, above, pp. 83-84.

²⁰⁷ Shortly after the publication of *Areopagitica*, John Saltmarsh was to write (*Dawnings of Light*, January 4, 1645, E1168[3], p. 44): "For their [Roman Catholic] *unity*, it hath such cold principles as freeze and congeale *multitudes*

Nor much better will be the consequence ev'n among the Clergy themselves; it is no new thing never heard of before, for a *parochiall*²⁰⁸ Minister, who has his reward, and is at his *Hercules* pillars²⁰⁹ in a warm benefice, to be easily inclinable, if he have nothing else that may rouse up his studies, to finish his circuit in an English concordance and a *topic folio*,²¹⁰ the gatherings and savings of a sober graduatship, a *Harmony* and a *Catena*,²¹¹ treading the constant round of certain common doctrinall heads, attended with their uses, motives, marks and [27] means,²¹² out of which as out of an alphabet or sol fa²¹³ by forming and transforming, joyning and dis-joyning variously a little book-craft, and two hours meditation might furnish him unspeakably to the performance of more then a weekly charge of sermoning: not to reck'n up the infinit helps of interlinearies, breviaries, *synopses*, and other loitering gear.²¹⁴ But as for the multitude of Sermons ready printed and pil'd up, on every text that is not difficult, our London trading St. *Thomas* in his vestry, and adde to boot St. *Martin*, and St. *Hugh*, have not within their hallow'd limits more vendible ware of all sorts ready

heterrogeneally together in the *worship of God*." I have been unable to determine whether Saltmarsh knew the *Areopagitica*.

²⁰⁸ Milton had not heretofore italicized this word (*cf. Complete Prose*, I, 537, 782, 789). Presumably he did so here to enforce the pun (minister of a parish, and parochial-minded minister).

²⁰⁹ Calpe (Gibraltar) and Abyla (on the African side) were said by the ancients to have been erected by Hercules to mark the limit of his navigation, and thus became a symbol for the ultimate in achievement.

²¹⁰ Commonplace-book.

²¹¹ *Harmony*: a handbook whose object is to bring into agreement apparently discordant passages in Scripture, especially the four gospels. *Catena*: a chain of extracts from the fathers, forming a commentary on some portion of Scripture.

²¹² "doctrinall heads . . . means": Milton is listing the "parts" into which most contemporary sermons were organized. After expounding the text, the sermon would normally draw from it one or more "doctrines," give their "applications" or "uses," show what "incitements" or "motives" there were for applying the doctrines in the prescribed ways, by what "marks" they could be known, what "means" could be employed in their application, etc.

²¹³ Musical scale.

²¹⁴ *Cf.* Henry Robinson, *John the Baptist* (September 23, 1644), E9(13), sig. B2v (p. 12 of insert), criticizing the method of determining the fitness of a candidate for ordination: "Perhaps they . . . examine such a one upon some few questions, and give him a Text to try whether his Common-place bookes, with such like ready helps can furnish him with a Sermon." For an earlier comment by Milton on dependence upon "loitering gear" see *Doctrine and Discipline*, above, pp. 232-33. "Interlinearies" are line-beneath-line translations.

made: ²¹⁵ so that penury he never need fear of Pulpit provision, having where so plenteously to refresh his magazin. But if his rear and flanks be not impal'd, ²¹⁶ if his back dore be not secur'd by the rigid licencer, but that a bold book may now and then issue forth, and give the assault to some of his old collections in their trenches, it will concern him then to keep waking, to stand in watch, to set good guards and sentinells about his receiv'd opinions, to walk the round and counter-round with his fellow inspectors, fearing lest any of his flock be seduc't, who also then would be better instructed, better exercis'd and disciplin'd. And God send that the fear of this diligence which must then be us'd, doe not make us affect the lazines of a licencing Church.

For if we be sure we are in the right, and doe not hold the truth guiltily, which becomes not, if we our selves condemn not our own weak and frivolous teaching, and the people for an untaught and irreligious gadding rout, what can be more fair, then when a man judicious, learned, and of a conscience, for ought we know, as good

²¹⁵ The general purport of this passage is clear enough, but the allusions are difficult. If "hallow'd limits" is taken to mean actual "precincts," then the only reference I can identify is to St. Martin le Grand; this liberty was a very busy centre of small (and often shady) commerce. If "hallow'd limits" is understood less technically to mean the area "sanctified" by the presence of a church, "St. Thomas" would appear to be a reference, by its older name, to Mercer's Chapel (originally Church of St. Thomas Acon); then "vestry" would be a pun on the clothes-markets which dominated the area. (Alternatively, if "vestry" is thought to indicate a parish church, the reference may be to the church of St. Thomas Apostle in Knightrider Street, which, being just south of St. Paul's, was in the centre of the bookselling trade.) See C. L. Kingsford's edition of Stow's *London* (2 vols., Oxford, 1908) for all these churches. There is no record of any church in London dedicated to St. Hugh, but a saint of this name became identified with the shoe trade. As members of the Cordwainers' Company the shoemakers had Crispin for patron saint; nevertheless, they seem to have felt the need for a sort of deputy patron reserved for themselves alone. One version of this unofficial sanctification is given in Rowley's *A Shoo-maker a Gentleman* (ca. 1609), where a Welsh prince named Sir Hugh, who has spent some time as a shoemaker, is martyred for Christianity (IV, ii, 209-20): "He shall no more be call'd Sir Hugh, but St. Hugh, and the Saint for ever of all the Shooemakers in England. . . . All our working tooles, from this time for ever, shall be call'd St. Hugh's bones." In the more familiar *Shoemaker's Holiday* of Dekker, Simon Eyre, wholly ignoring St. Crispin, explains (V, v, 157-60) that his fellows are "All shoemakers, my liege; all gentlemen of the Gentle Craft, true Trojans, courageous cordwainers; they all kneel to the shrine of St. Hugh." The sense of the passage: the materials to save a lazy preacher from the need to think for himself are as abundant as the merchandise available in the London areas and trades associated with these saints.

²¹⁶ Protected by palisading.

as theirs that taught us what we know, shall not privily from house to house, which is more dangerous, but openly by writing publish to the world what his opinion is, what his reasons, and wherefore that which is now thought cannot be sound. Christ urg'd it as wherewith to justifie himself, that he preacht in publick; ²¹⁷ yet writing is more publick then preaching; and more easie to refutation, if need be, there being so many whose businesse and profession meerly it is, to be the champions of Truth; which if they neglect, what can be imputed but their sloth, or unability?

Thus much we are hinder'd and dis-inur'd by this cours of licencing toward the true knowledge of what we seem to know. For how much it hurts and hinders the licensors themselves in the calling of their Ministry,²¹⁸ more then any secular employment, if they will [28] discharge that office as they ought, so that of necessity they must neglect either the one duty or the other, I insist not, because it is a particular, but leave it to their own conscience, how they will decide it there.

There is yet behind of what I purpos'd to lay open, the incredible losse, and detriment that this plot of licencing puts us to, more then if som enemy at sea should stop up all our hav'ns and ports, and creeks, it hinders and retards the importation of our richest Marchandize, Truth: ²¹⁹ nay it was first establisht and put in practice by Anti-christian malice and mystery on set purpose to extinguish, if it were possible, the light of Reformation, and to settle falshood; little differing from that policie wherewith the Turk upholds his *Alcoran*, by the prohibition of Printing.²²⁰ 'Tis not deny'd, but gladly confest,

²¹⁷ John 18:19–20.

²¹⁸ This is written as if all the licensors were clergymen. Since in fact divinity accounted for only twelve of thirty-four, the other licensors being drawn from the appropriate professions (Siebert, *Freedom of the Press*, pp. 186–87), Milton's emphasis strongly suggests that he thought the main object of the Licensing Order—aside from the suppression of royalist propaganda—to be “books of controversie in Religion”; *cf.* above, p. 519, n. 120.

²¹⁹ Possibly an echo of Matthew 13:45–46: “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”

²²⁰ Foxe, in a digression on “The Benefit and Invention of Printing,” declares (3 vols., 1641; I, 927) that, after Rome had overwhelmed the Wyclif and Huss movements, it was the providence of God that furnished men with the art of printing as an instrument of Reformation; “Wherefore I suppose, that either the Pope must abolish Printing, or he must seeke a new world to raigne over; for else, as this world standeth, Printing doubtlesse will abolish him.”

we are to send our thanks and vows to heav'n, louder then most of Nations, for that great measure of truth which we enjoy, especially in those main points between us and the Pope, with his appertinences the Prelats: but he who thinks we are to pitch our tent here, and have attain'd the utmost prospect of reformation, that the mortall glasse wherein we contemplate, can shew us, till we come to *beatific* vision,²²¹ that man by this very opinion declares, that he is yet farre short of Truth.

Truth indeed came once into the world with her divine Master, and was a perfect shape most glorious to look on: but when he ascended, and his Apostles after him were laid asleep, then strait arose a wicked race of deceivers, who as that story goes of the *AEgyptian Typhon* with his conspirators, how they dealt with the good *Osiris*, took the virgin Truth, hewd her lovely form into a thousand peeces, and scatter'd them to the four winds. From that time ever since, the sad friends of Truth, such as durst appear, imitating the carefull search that *Isis* made for the mangl'd body of *Osiris*, went up and down gathering up limb by limb still as they could find them.²²² We have not yet found them all, Lords and Commons, nor ever shall doe, till her Masters second comming; he shall bring together every joynt and member, and shall mould them into an immortall feature²²³ of lovelines and perfection. Suffer not these licencing prohibitions to stand at every place of opportunity forbidding and disturbing them that continue seeking, that continue

²²¹ I Corinthians 13:12: "For now we see through [by means of] a glass, darkly; but then face to face."

²²² The appropriateness of the Egyptian myth was probably suggested to Milton by Plutarch's "On Isis and Osiris," which, reporting the narrative legend much as Milton summarizes it, repeatedly insists that it must be understood as an allegory, and records the numerous extant interpretations. Plutarch himself (*Moralia*, 351-52; tr. F. C. Babbitt [14 vols., Loeb Classical Library, London: 1927 *et seq.*], V, 9) likens it to "the effort to arrive at the Truth, and especially the truth about the gods. . . . [Typhon] tears to pieces and scatters to the winds the sacred writings, which the goddess collects and puts together and gives into the keeping of those that are initiated into the holy rites . . . the end and aim of which is the knowledge of Him who is the First, the Lord of All, the Ideal One. Him does the goddess urge us to seek." Milton's friendliness to Isis and Osiris here is in marked contrast with "Nativity Ode," ll. 211-23, and *Paradise Lost*, I, 475-82.

²²³ feature: From *factura*: shape, *facere*: to make; *NED* def. 1c: "Something formed or shaped." Cf. *Paradise Lost*, X, 278: "So scented the grim feature."

to do our obsequies to the torn body of our martyr'd Saint.²²⁴ We boast our light; but if we look not wisely on the Sun it self, it smites us into darknes. Who can discern those [29] planets that are oft *Combust*,²²⁵ and those stars of brightest magnitude that rise and set with the Sun, untill the opposite motion of their orbs bring them to such a place in the firmament, where they may be seen evning or morning. The light which we have gain'd, was giv'n us, not to be ever staring on, but by it to discover onward things more remote from our knowledge.²²⁶ It is not the unfrocking of a Priest, the unmitring of a Bishop, and the removing him from off the *Presbyterian* shoulders that will make us a happy Nation, no, if other things as great in the Church, and in the rule of life both economicall and politicall be not lookt into and reform'd, we have lookt so long upon the blaze that *Zuinglius*²²⁷ and *Calvin* hath beacon'd up to us, that we are stark blind. There be who perpetually complain of schisms and sects, and make it such a calamity that any man dissents from their maxims. 'Tis their own pride and ignorance which causes the disturbing, who neither will hear with meeknes, nor can convince, yet all must be supprest which is not found in their *Syntagma*. They are the troublers, they are the dividers of unity, who neglect and permit not others to unite those dissever'd

²²⁴ In his anonymous *Queries of Highest Consideration* (February 9, 1644), Roger Williams confessed that he had not even tried to get his pamphlet licensed, knowing it would be useless. Then he added (*Publications of the Narragansett Club*, II, 253): "By such Circumscribing and immuring of your selves by such a *Guard* (their Persons we honour and esteem) it is rarely possible that any other *Light*, but what their Hemispheare affoords, shall ever shine on your *Honours* Souls, though ne're so *sweet*, so *necessary*, and though it come from *God*, from *Heaven*."

²²⁵ Within 8° 30' of the sun; in such positions their "influence" was "burnt up." The planets frequently combust are Venus, Mars, and Vulcan.

²²⁶ Cf. William Sedgewick, *Scripture A Perfect Rule* (December 28, 1643), E79(21), p. 34: "We may without arrogance thinke the Gospel hath gotten something in these fourescore yeeres, there is some more cleare light. They lived in the dawning of the day, we enjoy more light, that which succeeds us will be greater: and therefore it is no dishonour to them for us to proceed in a further reformation."

²²⁷ Huldrich Zwingli (1484–1531) secured the first legal sanction for the Reformation in Switzerland (in Zurich, 1519). Although his doctrines were later submerged by the more uncompromising ones of Calvin, he was reckoned of equal rank as a founder of the Reformed Church.

peeces which are yet wanting to the body of Truth.²²⁸ To be still searching what we know not, by what we know, still closing up truth to truth as we find it (for all her body is *homogeneal*, and proportionall) this is the golden rule²²⁹ in *Theology* as well as in *Arithmetick*, and makes up the best harmony in a Church; not the forc't and outward union of cold, and neutrall, and inwardly divided minds.

Lords and Commons of England, consider what Nation it is wherof ye are, and wherof ye are the governours: a Nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit, acute to invent, suttle and sinewy to discours, not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to. Therefore the studies of learning in her deepest Sciences have bin so ancient, and so eminent among us, that Writers of good antiquity, and ablest judgement have bin perswaded that ev'n the school of *Pythagoras*,²³⁰ and the *Persian* wisdom²³¹ took beginning from the old

²²⁸ Many Puritans (but in this the Presbyterians had not assumed their usual predominance) had levelled this charge at the bishops; e.g., Lord Brooke, "They cry out of Schisme, Schisme, Sects and Schismes; and well they may: They make them, and it is strange they should not know them. . . . *Schismes* in the *Conscience* are of greatest danger; and to prevent these, if I am forc't to that, which they please to call a *Schisme* in the Church, Woe to him that so forceth me." See *A Discourse Opening the Nature of that Episcopacie, which is Exercised in England* (1641), second ed., 1642 (in Haller, *Tracts*, II), p. 92. Hence, when Milton had taken the same line (e.g., in 1642, *Reason of Church-Government*, *Complete Prose*, I, 779 ff.) he was one of many. He appears, however, to have been the first in print to turn the argument against the Presbyterians. The next occurrence of the charge seems to be in the revised edition of *The Compassionate Samaritane* (January 5, 1645; pp. 49–50), where its insertion appears to be one of the very rare indications discoverable of immediate influence by the *Areopagitica*: "And then for the charge of Separating, for their making a Scisme. . . . May not I say this, Reverend Synod: . . . to be proceeded against by such carnall sandy principles, such humane ordinances, by which the Separatists stand prejudiced, [is] . . . to have made the greatest and most transcendent scisme which England ever knew or heard of, since the Papistrie was discarded." See introduction, above, p. 87. Syntagma: compilation, collection.

²²⁹ The Rule of Proportion is often called the "golden rule of arithmetic" because of its great serviceability in determining unknown quantities.

²³⁰ This is a complex allusion. The primary reference is to the doctrine of metempsychosis. Drayton (*Poly-Olbion*, 1613, UCL, p. 2) attributes the doctrine to the British Druids, and Selden defends his friend's poetic licence by saying (pp. 14–15), "*Lipsius* doubts whether *Pythagoras* received it from the *Druids*, or they from him, because in his travels he convers't as well with *Gaulish* as *Indian* Philosophers." Milton's own strong early interest in Pythagoras was

Philosophy of this Iland. And that wise and civill Roman, *Julius Agricola*, who govern'd once here for *Caesar*, preferr'd the naturall wits of Britain, before the labour'd studies of the French.²³² Nor is it for nothing that the grave and frugal *Transilvanian* sends out yearly from as farre as the mountanous borders of *Russia*, and beyond the *Hercynian* wildernes, not their youth, but their stay'd men, to learn our language, and our *theologic* [30] arts.²³³ Yet that which is above all this, the favour and the love of heav'n we have great argument to think in a peculiar manner propitious and propending towards us. Why else was this Nation chos'n before any other, that out of her as out of *Sion* should be proclam'd and sounded forth the first tidings and trumpet of Reformation to all *Europ*. And had it not bin the obstinat perversnes of our Prelats

based on the doctrine of harmony; see, e.g., Prolusion II, *Complete Prose*, I, 234 ff. Since Milton has only one of Pythagoras' doctrines in mind (and not the one which really interested him), his phrase is somewhat comprehensive. This is because of a secondary reference to a famous twelfth-century building in Cambridge, originally known as the Stone House, then as Merton Hall, and since the sixteenth century as the "School of Pythagoras." The latter name seems to be due to what is sometimes called the oldest inter-university sport, the "lying match" regarding the relative antiquity of Oxford and Cambridge; see J. M. Gray, *The School of Pythagoras (Merton Hall) Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1932), pp. 37-38.

²³¹ I.e., the art of magic. Milton is echoing Pliny the Elder, who having said (*Natural History*, XXX, 2; tr. H. Rackham [10 vols., Loeb Classical Library, 1938 ff], V, 222), "There is no doubt that this art originated in Persia, under Zoroaster," emphasizes the extent of its influence by saying (XXX, 4; Rackham, V, 426), "At the present day, struck with fascination, Britannia still cultivates this art, and that, with ceremonials so august, that she might almost seem to have been the first to communicate them to the people of Persia [*ut dedisse Persis videri possit*]." Milton is using everything he can find; this "wisdom," in which he says the ancient Britons may have been "acute" enough to anticipate the Persians, seemed to his source (*ibid.*, Rackham, V, 427) "those monstrous rites, in accordance with which, to murder a man was to do an act of the greatest devoutness, and to eat his flesh was to secure the highest blessings of health." Cf. *History of Britain*, Book II (1670, p. 49) and *Doctrine and Discipline*, above, p. 231.

²³² Tacitus, *Agricola*, 21. Agricola (A.D. 37-93) was proconsul in Britain, 78-85. He therefore actually governed for three Caesars: Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian. Cf. Milton's *History of Britain*, Book II (1670, p. 71).

²³³ Transylvania (now part of Roumania) was independent from 1535 to 1689, and was strongly Protestant; many of its divines came to study theology at the great Protestant universities of the west. *Hyrkania Silva* was the general name given by Julius Caesar to the mountains and forests of central and southern Germany.

against the divine and admirable spirit of *Wicklef*, to suppress him as a schismatic and *innovator*, perhaps neither the *Bohemian Husse* and *Jerom*,²³⁴ no nor the name of *Luther*, or of *Calvin* had bin ever known: the glory of reforming all our neighbours had bin compleatly ours. But now, as our obdurat Clergy have with violence demean'd the matter, we are become hitherto the latest and the backwardest Schollers, of whom God offer'd to have made us the teachers. Now once again by all concurrence of signs, and by the generall instinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and solemnly expresse their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in his Church, ev'n to the reforming of Reformation it self: what does he then but reveal Himself to his servants, and as his manner is, first to his English-men; ²³⁵ I say as his manner is, first to us, though we mark not the method of his counsels, and are unworthy. Behold now this vast City; a City of refuge,²³⁶ the

²³⁴ For Wyclif and Huss, see above, p. 502, n. 59. Jerome of Prague (*ca.* 1365–1416) was a disciple of both Wyclif and Huss. For an earlier expression of the idea that the English were a chosen people whose mission of reforming the church had been frustrated by its clergy, see *Of Reformation, Complete Prose*, I, 525–26; *cf.* also *Doctrine and Discipline*, above, pp. 231–32, and *Tetrachordon*, below, p. 707.

²³⁵ *Cf.* Thomas Goodwin *et al.*, *An Apologeticall Narration* (1644), pp. 22–23: “We do professedly judge the *Calvinian* Reformed Churches of the first reformation from out of Popery, to stand in need of a further reformation themselves; And it may without prejudice to them, or the imputation of Schisme in us from them, be thought, that they comming new out of Popery (as well as *England*) and the founders of that reformation not having *Apostolique infallibility*, might not be fully perfect the first day. Yea and it may hopefully be conceived, that *God* in his secret, yet wise and gracious dispensation, had left *England* more unreformed as touching the outward form, both of worship & Church government, then the neighbour Churches were, . . . as having in his infinite mercy on purpose reserved and *provided some better thing* for this Nation when it should come to be reformed, that the other Churches might not be made *perfect without it*, as the Apostle speaks.” See introduction, above, pp. 72–73.

In *Doctrine and Discipline* (above, p. 232) Milton had sounded more confident of England’s “wonted prerogative, of being the first asserters in every vindication” of God’s glory. *Cf.* also *Martin Bucer* (above, p. 438): “a nation that expects now, and from mighty sufferings aspires to be the example of all Christendom to a perfettest reforming.”

²³⁶ Numbers 35 instructs the Jews to establish six “cities of refuge” where those who have committed unpremeditated manslaughter may take sanctuary from “the revenger of blood.” The parallel was not as embarrassing as it may seem. Milton’s audience was unlikely to think of the followers of Parliament as manslaughterers, and he was not at all reluctant that they should conceive of (and fear) the royalists as revengers of blood (see introduction, above, pp. 55–56).

mansion house of liberty, encompassed and surrounded with his protection; the shop of warre hath not there more anvils and hammers waking, to fashion out the plates and instruments of armed Justice in defence of beleaguer'd Truth, then there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and idea's wherewith to present, as with their homage and their fealty the approaching Reformation:²³⁷ others as fast reading, trying all things, assenting to the force of reason and convincement. What could a man require more from a Nation so pliant and so prone to seek after knowledge. What wants there to such a towardly and pregnant soile, but wise and faithfull labourers, to make a knowing people, a Nation of Prophets,²³⁸ of Sages, and of Worthies. We reck'n more then five months yet to harvest; there need not be five weeks, had we but eyes to lift up, the fields are white already.²³⁹ Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making. Under these fantastic terrors of [31] sect and schism, we wrong the earnest and zealous thirst after knowledge and understanding which God hath stirr'd up in this City. What some lament of, we rather should rejoyce at, should rather praise this pious forwardnes among men, to reassume the ill deputed care of their Religion into their own hands again.²⁴⁰ A little generous prudence, a little forbearance of one another,²⁴¹ and som grain of charity might win all these diligences to joyn, and unite into one generall and brotherly search after Truth; could we but forgoe this Prelaticall tradition of crowding free consciences and Christian liberties²⁴² into canons and precepts of men. I doubt

²³⁷ The flourishing condition of the arms industry was due to the state of the Civil War; that of the publishing industry in good part to the toleration controversy, to which the *Areopagitica* belonged (see introduction, above, pp. 57–130).

²³⁸ Cf. below, p. 556, n. 245.

²³⁹ This is an adaptation of John 4:35, with five months substituted for four; Milton's reason for the change is obscure. Cf. *Hirelings* (1659), p. 87, where the waiting period is omitted altogether.

²⁴⁰ Cf. Robinson, *Liberty of Conscience*, sig. a1: "Amongst all those that professe Christianity, I conceive it may easily be observed, that such as study the variety of opinions, and trie the spirits out of a zeale to truth, choosing their Religion by their owne judgements, though erronious, are yet more jealous of Gods worship, and conscionable towards men." See introduction, above, pp. 83–84.

²⁴¹ Ephesians 4:2.

²⁴² See below, p. 563, n. 275, and introduction, above, pp. 65–69.

not, if some great and worthy stranger should come among us, wise to discern the mould and temper of a people, and how to govern it, observing the high hopes and aims, the diligent alacrity of our extended thoughts and reasonings in the pursuance of truth and freedom, but that he would cry out as *Pirrhus* did, admiring the Roman docility and courage, if such were my *Epirots*, I would not despair the greatest design that could be attempted to make a Church or Kingdom happy.²⁴³ Yet these are the men cry'd out against for schismatics and sectaries; as if, while the Temple of the Lord was building, some cutting, some squaring the marble, others hewing the cedars, there should be a sort of irrationall men who could not consider there must be many schisms and many dissections made in the quarry and in the timber, ere the house of God can be built.²⁴⁴ And when every stone is laid artfully together, it cannot be united into a continuity, it can but be contiguous in this world; neither can every peece of the building be of one form; nay rather the perfection consists in this, that out of many moderat varieties and brotherly dissimilitudes that are not vastly disproportionall arises the goodly and the gracefull symmetry that commends the whole pile and structure. Let us therefore be more considerat builders, more wise in spirituall architecture, when great reformation is expected. For now the time seems come, wherein *Moses* the great Prophet may sit in heav'n rejoycing to see that memorable and glorious wish of his fulfill'd, when not only our sev'nty Elders, but

²⁴³ Pyrrhus (*ca.* 318–272 B.C.), king of Epirus, defeated the Romans under Valerius Laevinus at Heraclea, 280 B.C. Florus (*Epitome Rerum Romanorum*, I, 18) says that after the battle he declared that he would think it easy to conquer the world if either his own soldiers were like the Romans, or if he were king of Rome.

²⁴⁴ This is a remarkable example of Milton's technique of reversing a damaging received inference from a scriptural text by enlarging the scope of the reference. In building the Temple, Solomon had the stones cut to size before being brought to the construction site, so that the quiet of the holy place would be undisturbed. This became one of the arguments for religious conformity; *e.g.*, Thomas Hill, *The Good Old Way, Gods Way* (April 24, 1644), E48(4), p. 39: "It is an observation of a *Learned Divine*, from that passage in 1 *Kin.* 6.7. while the Temple was in building, there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any toole of iron heard in the house . . . That no noise of contentions and schismes (saith hee) might be heard, O that God would grant this mercy, that in his house wee might all thinke and speake the same thing." Milton turns attention from this particular verse to the general account occupying two chapters (I Kings 5–6), and echoes enough of it to bring the necessary cutting operations to the fore.

all the Lords people are become Prophets.²⁴⁵ No marvell then though some men, and some good men too perhaps, but young in goodnesse, as *Joshua* then was, envy them. They fret, and out of their own weaknes are in agony, lest these divisions and subdivisions will undoe us. [32] The adversarie again applauds, and waits the hour, when they have brancht themselves out, saith he, small anough into parties and partitions, then will be our time.²⁴⁶ Fool! he sees not the firm root, out of which we all grow, though into branches: ²⁴⁷ nor will beware untill he see our small divided maniples ²⁴⁸ cutting through at every angle of his ill united and unweildy brigade. And that we are to hope better of all these supposed sects and schisms, and that we shall not need that solicitude honest perhaps though over timorous of them that vex in this behalf, but shall laugh in the end, at those malicious applauders of our differences, I have these reasons to perswade me.

First, when a City shall be as it were besieg'd and blockt about,

²⁴⁵ Numbers 11:27–29: “And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophecy in the camp. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them. And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!”

²⁴⁶ This was, of course, a recurrent theme of royalist propaganda. *E.g.*, *Mercurius Aulicus* for August 10, 1643 (E65[26], p. 431): “The heates in *London* (according to the season) doe still increase; and . . . the discontents which have late beene growing betweene the remaining partie in the two *Houses*, are at the last improved to a *sedition*, if not unto a *Civill Warre* amongst themselves”; again, on August 18, 1644 (E9[5], p. 1127): “A sharpe difference betwixt the *Conqueror* and the *Wood-monger* (commonly called Sir *William Waller* and Colonell *Browne*) who have broken out into such unbrotherly language, as if one were an *Independent*, and the other a *Presbyterian* . . . the *Conqueror* posted up to *Westminster* . . . and complained that Colonell *Browne* would yeild him no obedience.”

²⁴⁷ Cf. Walwyn, *Compassionate Samaritane*, p. 44, which, anticipating the objection that “nothing is more dangerous to a State, espeacially in these times, than division,” answers, “that the diversity of mens judgements are not the occasion of division because the word division hath reference to a falling off from the Common cause. Now, though the provocations and incitements against the Brownists and Anabaptists, and some of the Independents have beene many, yet their affections to the Publike weale are so hearty in them, and grounded upon such sound principalls of reason, that no assay of the Synod can make them cease to love and assist their Country.” See introduction, above, pp. 84–87.

²⁴⁸ Tactical unit in the Roman army, approximately equivalent to the modern infantry company.

her navigable river infested, inrodes and incursions round, defiance and battell oft rumor'd to be marching up ev'n to her walls, and suburb trenches,²⁴⁹ that then the people, or the greater part, more then at other times, wholly tak'n up with the study of highest and most important matters to be reform'd, should be disputing, reasoning, reading, inventing, discoursing, ev'n to a rarity, and admiration,²⁵⁰ things not before discourst or writt'n of, argues first a singular good will, contentednesse and confidence in your prudent foresight, and safe government, Lords and Commons; and from thence derives it self to a gallant bravery and well grounded contempt of their enemies, as if there were no small number of as great spirits among us, as his was, who when Rome was nigh besieg'd by *Hanibal*, being in the City, bought that peece of ground at no cheap rate, whereon *Hanibal* himself encampt his own regiment.²⁵¹ Next it is a lively and cherfull presage of our happy successe and victory. For as in a body, when the blood is fresh, the spirits pure and vigorous, not only to vital, but to rationall faculties, and those in the acutest, and the pertest operations of wit and suttlety, it argues in what good plight and constitution the body is, so when the cherfulness of the people is so sprightly up, as that it has, not only wherewith to guard well its own freedom and safety, but to spare, and to bestow upon the solidest and sublimest points of controversie, and new invention, it betok'ns us not degenerated, nor drooping to a fatall decay, but casting off the old and wrincl'd skin of corruption to outlive these pangs and wax young again, entring the glorious waies of Truth and prosperous vertue destin'd to be-
[33]come great and honourable in these latter ages.²⁵² Methinks I

²⁴⁹ In November, 1642, the royalist army advanced as far as Turnham Green and threatened an attack on London, then unfortified; faced by Essex, it fell back to Reading. The following summer the city erected a fortification based upon a twelve-mile circuit of "suburb trenches." For some time thereafter, with Arundel, Reading, and Newport Pagnell being royalist strongholds, London was under intermittent threat. See introduction, above, p. 5.

²⁵⁰ admiration: Here, in the sense of astonishment.

²⁵¹ The story is in Livy, 26, 11.

²⁵² For a discussion of the contemporary debate on whether nature had outlived its vigor and was decaying, see Victor Harris, *All Coherence Gone* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949). In 1628, in "Naturam non Pati Senium," Milton had espoused the negative (perhaps on assignment; see *Complete Prose*, I, 313-14); in 1631-1632, in the seventh prolusion, he had let the affirmative go unchallenged, but this need not indicate agreement (he was prob-

see in my mind a noble and puissant Nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: ²⁵³ Methinks I see her as an Eagle muing ²⁵⁴ her mighty youth, and kindling her undazl'd eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long abused sight at the fountain it self of heav'nly radiance; ²⁵⁵ while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amaz'd at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticat ²⁵⁶ a year of sects and schisms.

What should ye doe then, should ye suppress all this flowry crop of knowledge and new light sprung up and yet springing daily in this City, should ye set an *Oligarchy* of twenty ingrossers ²⁵⁷

ably setting the stage for his doctrine of true glory; see *Complete Prose*, I, 302). The use of the snake as a symbol of the revitalization of England may seem strange in the author of *Paradise Lost*, but it had been a literary favorite at least since Virgil's description (*Georgics*, III, 437-38) of the serpent in summer "when, slipped his slough, / To glittering youth transformed he winds his spires," *Poems*, tr. James Rhoades (Oxford: World's Classics, 1929), p. 364.

²⁵³ The reference is to Samson frustrating the first three attempts of Delila and the Philistines to subdue him in his sleep (Judges 16:6-14). Milton had already used Samson as a symbol of England; see *Reason of Church-Government*, *Complete Prose*, I, 858-59.

²⁵⁴ So in the original. *Mew* is a term in falconry meaning to moult; hence it can carry the secondary meaning of renewal, which is apparently Milton's intention here (*cf.* the snake, above, p. 557, n. 252). Some editions treat "muing" as a misprint for "newing" or "renuing"; the argument for the former is in R. S. Loomis, *Modern Language Notes*, XXXII (1917), 437-38, and for the latter in G. M. Yule, *Review of English Studies*, XIX (1943), 61-67. The argument against "muing" fails to take account of the tradition associating the moulting of eagles with renewal (see next note).

²⁵⁵ The image derives from the bestiaries. We do not know whether Milton was accustomed to using the antique or the medieval form; a thirteenth-century English version (translated from the *Physiologus* of Theobaldus) runs: "*Natura aquile.* / Kiðen i wille ðe ernes kinde, / Also ic it o boke rede, / wu he neweð his guðhede, / hu he cumeð ut of elde . . . / A welle he sekeð ðat springeð ai / boðe bi nigt *and* bi dai, / ðer-over he flegeð, *and* up he teð, / til ðat he ðe hevene seð, / ðurg skies sexe *and* sevene / til he cumeð to hevene; / So rigt so he cunne / he hoveð in ðe sunne; / ðe sunne swideð al his fligt, / *and* oc it makeð his egen brigt. / Hise feðres fallen for ðe hete, / *and* he dun mide to ðe wete / falleð in ðat welle grund, / ðer he wurdeð heil *and* sund, / *and* cumeð ut al newe." See E.E.T.S., vol. 49, p. 3.

²⁵⁶ Would prognosticat: *I.e.*, the noises they make, unintelligible to ordinary men ("gabble"), are intended to cause the augurs to prognosticate to this effect; *cf.* above, p. 497, n. 41.

²⁵⁷ *Cf.* above, p. 535, n. 171.

over it, to bring a famin upon our minds again, when we shall know nothing but what is measur'd to us by their bushel? Beleeve it, Lords and Commons, they who counsell ye to such a suppressing, doe as good as bid ye suppress your selves; and I will soon shew how. If it be desir'd to know the immediat cause of all this free writing and free speaking, there cannot be assign'd a truer then your own mild, and free, and human government; it is the liberty, Lords and Commons, which your own valorous and happy counsels have purchast us, liberty which is the nurse of all great wits; this is that which hath rarify'd and enlightn'd our spirits like the influence of heav'n; this is that which hath enfranchis'd, enlarg'd and lifted up our apprehensions degrees above themselves. Ye cannot make us now lesse capable, lesse knowing, lesse eagarly pursuing of the truth, unlesse ye first make your selves, that made us so, lesse the lovers, lesse the founders of our true liberty. We can grow ignorant again, brutish, formall, and slavish, as ye found us; but you then must first become that which ye cannot be, oppressive, arbitrary, and tyrannous, as they were from whom ye have free'd us. That our hearts are now more capacious, our thoughts more erected to the search and expectation of greatest and exactest things, is the issue of your owne vertu propagated in us; ye cannot suppress that unlesse ye reinforce an abrogated and mercillesse law, that fathers may dispatch at will their own children.²⁵⁸ And who shall then stick closest to ye, and excite others? not he who takes up armes for cote and conduct, and his four nobles of Danegelt.²⁵⁹ Although I

²⁵⁸ The absolute legal power of the Roman father over his children (*jus vitae et necis*) had fallen into desuetude much earlier, but was not formally abolished until 318 A.D.; it was never revived.

²⁵⁹ cote and conduct: A form of taxation levied on the counties, to pay for the clothing and transportation of new troops recruited within their boundaries. noble: A coin worth 6s. 8d. Danegelt: shipmoney, which was originally levied to raise money for a fleet to oppose, or a bribe to placate, the Danes. Charles' effort to levy and collect these taxes without the consent of Parliament was another violation of "just immunities" contributing greatly to the national discontent; see the *Grand Remonstrance* of 1641 (Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents*, pp. 211 and 221). Cf. above, p. 535, n. 172, and p. 545, n. 205. The passage is variously interpreted, and its sense is not beyond dispute, but it would seem to be: If you suppress liberty your supporters will abandon you; their initial adherence may have been given on the issue of illegal taxation, but what concerned them in that was less the money (which they value below peace) than the threat to liberty inherent in such a procedure.

Cf. *M.S. to A.S.* (May 3, 1644), E45 (3), sig. N1v (page misnumbered 82):

dispraise not the defence of just immunities, yet love my [34] peace better, if that were all. Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.

What would be best advis'd then, if it be found so hurtfull and so unequall to suppress opinions for the newnes, or the unsutablenes to a customary acceptance, will not be my task to say; I only shall repeat what I have learnt from one of your own honourable number, a right noble and pious Lord, who had he not sacrific'd his life and fortunes to the Church and Commonwealth, we had not now mist and bewayl'd a worthy and undoubted patron of this argument. Ye know him I am sure; yet I for honours sake, and may it be eternall to him, shall name him, the Lord *Brook*.²⁶⁰ He writing of Episcopacy, and by the way treating of sects and schisms, left Ye his vote, or rather now the last words of his dying charge,

"For men that are truly conscientious, civill libertie (as it is called) *i.* freedome from illegall taxes, impositions, exactions, imprisonments, without libertie of conscience, is an accommodation of little value; yea without this, such men are not capable of much ease or benefit by the other. They are still in danger of hearing in trouble and molestation from the State, for their conscience sake."

Just immunities: A few months earlier, in the address to Parliament in *Martin Bucer*, Milton had laid down a similar challenge (above, p. 438): "What are all our public immunities and privileges worth, and how shall it be judg'd that we fight for them with minds worthy to enjoy them, if wee suffer our selvs in the mean while not to understand the most important freedom that God and Nature hath givn us in the family."

²⁶⁰ Robert Greville, second Lord Brooke (1608–1643), one of the leaders of the Parliamentary party in the House of Lords and a general of the Parliamentary army, had been killed assaulting Lichfield; *cf.* *Complete Prose*, I, 145–48. The whole final section of his *Discourse of Episcopacie* (already cited in note 228; and see introduction, above, p. 181) is relevant to Milton's argument here, but there appears to be a particular reference to the conclusion (1642 ed., pp. 117–18): "But when God shall so enlarge his Hand, and unveil his face, that the poore creature is brought into communion and acquaintance with his Creator: steered in all his wayes, by his spirit; and by it carried up above shame, feare, pleasure, comfort, losses, grave, and death it selfe; Let us not censure such Tempers, but blesse God for them. . . . God assisting me, my desire, prayer, endeavour shall still be, as much as in me lies, to follow peace and holinesse; and though there may haply be some little dissent betweene my darke judgement, weake conscience, and other Good men, that are much more cleare and strong; yet my prayer still shall be, to *keepe the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*. And as many as walke after this Rule, Peace I hope shall still be on them, and the whole Israel of God." George W. Whiting ("Milton and Lord Brooke on the Church," *Modern Language Notes*, LI [1936], pp. 161–66) has shown that Brooke's *Discourse* is in turn indebted to Milton's *Of Prelatical Episcopacie*.

which I know will ever be of dear and honour'd regard with Ye, so full of meeknes and breathing charity, that next to his last testament, who bequeath'd love and peace to his Disciples,²⁶¹ I cannot call to mind where I have read or heard words more mild and peacefull. He there exhorts us to hear with patience and humility those, however they be miscall'd, that desire to live purely, in such a use of Gods Ordinances, as the best guidance of their conscience gives them, and to tolerat them, though in some disconformity to our selves. The book it self will tell us more at large being publisht to the world, and dedicated to the Parliament by him who both for his life and for his death deserves, that what advice he left be not laid by without perusall.

And now the time in speciall is,²⁶² by priviledge to write and speak what may help to the further discussing of matters in agitation. The Temple of *Janus* with his two *controversal* faces might now not unsignificantly be set open.²⁶³ And though all the windes of doctrin were let loose to play upon the earth,²⁶⁴ so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licencing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falshood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the wors, in a free and open encounter.²⁶⁵ Her confuting is the best and surest suppressing.²⁶⁶ He who hears what praying there is

²⁶¹ John 14:15–31, especially 21 and 27.

²⁶² Because Parliament was in session, the Westminster Assembly in convention, and the Civil War in progress.

²⁶³ The image of Janus, the Roman god of gateways, had two heads facing in opposite directions ("*controversal*"). His temple in the Forum was open during war, shut in peace.

²⁶⁴ Ephesians 4:14–15: "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

²⁶⁵ Cf. Robinson, *Liberty of Conscience*, p. 59: "Doe we suspect that errour should vanquish truth? this is so vaine that no man will confesse so much." See introduction, above, pp. 83–84.

²⁶⁶ Cf. John Goodwin, *Theomachia* (1644; E12[1]), p. 33: "It being certain that error cannot be healed or suppressed but by the manifestation of the truth, as darknesse cannot be destroyed or removed but by the shining of the light; that way which affords the greatest advantages and the best encouragements unto men, both for the searching out, and bringing forth into light the truth being found, must needs be so farre from opening doores unto *errors, heresies, unsound opinions*, &c. that it steers the most advantagious and hopefull course that lightly can be taken, for the evicting, and consequently for the suppression of them." See introduction, above, pp. 112–13. There is a pleasant irony in the fact

for light and clearer knowledge to be sent down among us, would think of other matters to be constituted beyond the discipline of *Geneva*, fram'd and fabric't already to our hands.²⁶⁷ Yet when the [35] new light which we beg for shines in upon us, there be who envy, and oppose, if it come not first in at their casements.²⁶⁸ What a collusion is this, whenas we are exhorted by the wise man to use diligence, *to seek for wisdom as for hidd'n treasures*²⁶⁹ early and late, that another order shall enjoyn us to know nothing but by statute. When a man hath bin labouring the hardest labour in the deep mines of knowledge, hath furnisht out his findings in all their equipage, drawn forth his reasons as it were a battell raung'd, scatter'd and defeated all objections in his way, calls out his adversary into the plain, offers him the advantage of wind and sun, if he please; only that he may try the matter by dint of argument, for his opponents then to skulk, to lay ambushments, to keep a narrow bridge of licencing where the challenger should passe, though it be valour anough in shouldiership, is but weaknes and cowardise in the wars of Truth. For who knows not that Truth is strong next to the

that two pamphlets published in the same month as *Areopagitica*, agreeing with the tenet here proclaimed by Milton, declare that it shows the only way to suppress Milton's own doctrine of divorce; see introduction, above, pp. 142–43.

²⁶⁷ Cf. William Bridge, *A Sermon Preached Before the Honourable House of Commons* (November 29, 1643), E79(11), p. 24: "You know what other Reformed Churches have done, the Reformation of all other Churches are round about you, you have their writings before you, their books, their practices, their examples, and this for many yeeres; can you think that God hath set us now for an hundred yeeres upon their shoulders, to see no farther into Reformation then they have done?" The "discipline of *Geneva*" is Presbyterianism.

²⁶⁸ Cf. Roger Williams, *Queries of Highest Consideration* (February 9, 1644; *Publications of the Narragansett Club*, II, 273): "Since you both professe to want more Light, and that a greater Light is yet to be expected; . . . how can you professe and Sweare to Persecute all others as Schismatiques, Hereticks, &c., that beleeve they see a further Light and dare not joyn with either of your Churches?" Cf. also Brooke, *Discourse of Episcopacie* (second ed., 1642), p. 116: "The Light, still, will, must, cannot but encrease; why then doe wee shut our eyes? Let it not bee said of us, that Light came in & grew up among us, yet we would not use it (for we cannot but receive it) because we loved darknesse."

²⁶⁹ Reference is usually made to Matthew 13:44 ("the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hidden in a field") or Proverbs 8:11 ("wisdom is better than rubies"). Neither of these is close enough to justify Milton's use of italics (*i.e.*, mark of quotation), and the former is not even "by the wise man," which means Solomon. Milton's allusion is to Proverbs 2:4–5: "If thou seekest her [wisdom] as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."

Almighty; she needs no policies, nor stratagems, nor licencings to make her victorious, those are the shifts and the defences that error uses against her power: ²⁷⁰ give her but room, & do not bind her when she sleeps, for then she speaks not true, as the old *Proteus* did, who spake oracles only when he was caught & bound,²⁷¹ but then rather she turns herself into all shapes, except her own, and perhaps tunes her voice according to the time, as *Micaiah* did before *Ahab*,²⁷² untill she be adjur'd into her own likenes. Yet is it not impossible that she may have more shapes then one. What else is all that rank of things indifferent,²⁷³ wherein Truth may be on this side, or on the other, without being unlike her self. What but a vain shadow else is the abolition of *those ordinances, that hand writing nayl'd to the crosse*,²⁷⁴ what great purchase is this Christian liberty which *Paul* so often boasts of.²⁷⁵ His doctrine is, that he who eats or eats not, regards a day, or regards it not, may doe either to the Lord.²⁷⁶ How many other things might be tolerated in peace, and left to conscience, had we but charity, and were it not the chief strong hold of our hypocrisie to be ever judging one another.²⁷⁷ I fear yet this iron yoke of outward conformity hath left

²⁷⁰ Cf. Walwyn's *Compassionate Samaritane*, pp. 55–56: "But then for the assurance of the Divines that their conclusions & Articles are certainly true, if it bee built upon certaine foundations, they neede not avoid the cumbat with any sort of men of what opinion soever: Truth was not used to feare colours, or to seeke shifts or stratagems for its advancement! I should rather thinke that they who are assured of her should desire that all mens mouthes should be open, that so errour may discover its foulness, and truth become more glorious by a victorious conquest after a fight in open field: they shun the battell that doubt their strength." See introduction, above, pp. 84–87.

²⁷¹ *Odyssey*, IV, 384–93; cf. *Georgics*, IV, 387–452. ²⁷² I Kings 22:1–36.

²⁷³ See introduction, above, pp. 68–69. ²⁷⁴ Colossians, 2:14.

²⁷⁵ Especially in Romans and Galatians. ²⁷⁶ Romans 14:1–13.

²⁷⁷ Cf. Walwyn's "Good Counsell," originally published as the final section of *The Compassionate Samaritane*, pp. 78–79: "[Christ] allowed them to be fully perswaded in their own minds using no meanes but argument and perswasion to alter or controle their judgements: Hee knew that men might live peaceably and lovingly together, though they differ in judgement one from another. . . . His servant and Apostle *Paul* was of the same mind also . . . : hee desires that those who are strong in faith, should beare with those that are weake, adviseth him that eateth, that hee should not condemne him that eateth not: where one observeth a day to the Lord, and others not, (though a matter of great moment) yet he alloweth every one to be fully perswaded in his own mind. Now . . . what spirit are they of, whose Ministers are they, that would have al men compelled to submit to their probabilities and doubtfull determinations." (Not in second edition.) See introduction, above, pp. 84–87.

a slavish print upon our necks; the ghost of a linnen decency²⁷⁸ yet haunts us. We stumble and are impatient at the least dividing of one visible congregation from another, though it be not in fundamentalls;²⁷⁹ and through our forwardnes to suppress, and our backwardnes to recover any [36] enthrall'd peece of truth out of the gripe of custom,²⁸⁰ we care not to keep truth separated from truth, which is the fiercest rent and disunion of all. We doe not see that while we still affect by all means a rigid externall formality, we may as soon fall again into a grosse conforming stupidity, a stark and dead congealment of *wood and hay and stubble*²⁸¹ forc't and frozen together, which is more to the sudden degenerating of a Church then many *subdichotomies* of petty schisms.²⁸² Not that I can think well of every light separation, or that all in a Church is to be expected *gold and silver and pretious stones*:²⁸³ it is not possible for man to sever the wheat from the tares, the good fish from the other frie; that must be the Angels Ministry at the end

²⁷⁸ It was in the name of "decency" that Laud enforced uniformity in rites and ceremonies; see, e.g., articles VII–VIII, *Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiasticall* (1640); *Complete Prose*, I, 992–93. "Linnen" alludes to the vestments long hated by the Puritans; cf. *Mercurius Britanicus*. Numb. 52 (October 7, 1644), E13(10), p. 413: "The Bishops cheating tricks, whereby they deluded the consciences of men, and under the name of *Decencie*, and *Conformity to reverend Antiquity*, brought in many *Popish Innovations*, and in their Surplices, Copes, and Hoods, had well nigh ushered the Pope into *England*."

²⁷⁹ For an example of Presbyterian insistence on excommunication for differences of opinion or practice admittedly not "fundamental," see the Scottish Commissioners' *Reformation of Church-Government in Scotland, Cleered from some Mistakes and Prejudices* (January 24, 1644), E30(5), pp. 20–21: "To limit the censure of excommunication, in matter of opinion to the common and uncontroverted principles, and in the matter of manners to the common, and universall practises of Christianitie, and in both to the parties known light, is the dangerous doctrine of the Arminians, and Socinians, openeth a wide dore, and proclaimeth libertie to all other practises and errors, which are not fundamentall, and universally abhorred by all Christians, and tendeth to the overthrow of the Reformed Religion."

²⁸⁰ For a fuller statement of the opposition of truth and custom, see the opening of *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, above, pp. 222–26. See also Ernest Sirluck, "Milton Revises *The Faerie Queene*," *Modern Philology*, XLVIII (1950), 90–96.

²⁸¹ I Corinthians 3:10–13.

²⁸² Cf. Brooke, *Discourse* (second ed., 1642), p. 91: "The Spaniard indeed by his cruell *Inquisition*, hath inclined his Subjects to a kinde of *Unity*; but an Unity of Darknesse and Ignorance; so that the Remedy proves worse than the Disease."

²⁸³ I Corinthians 3:10–13.

of mortall things.²⁸⁴ Yet if all cannot be of one mind, as who looks they should be? this doubtles is more wholesome, more prudent, and more Christian that many be tolerated, rather then all compell'd. I mean not tolerated Popery, and open superstition, which as it extirpats all religions²⁸⁵ and civill supremacies,²⁸⁶ so it self should be extirpat, provided first that all charitable and compassionat means be us'd to win and regain the weak and the misled: that also which is impious or evil absolutely either against faith or maners²⁸⁷ no law can possibly permit, that intends not to unlaw it self: but those neighboring differences, or rather indifferences, are what I speak of, whether in some point of doctrine or of discipline, which though they may be many, yet need not interrupt *the unity of Spirit*, if we could but find among us *the bond of peace*.²⁸⁸ In the mean while if any one would write, and bring his helpfull hand to the slow-moving Reformation which we labour under, if Truth have spok'n to him before others, or but seem'd at least to speak, who hath so bejesuited us that we should trouble that man with asking licence to doe so worthy a deed? and not consider this, that if it come to prohibiting, there is not ought more likely to be prohibited then truth it self; whose first appearance to our eyes blear'd and dimm'd with prejudice and custom, is more unsightly and un-plausible then many errors,²⁸⁹ ev'n as the person is of many a great

²⁸⁴ Matthew 13:24–30 and 36–43.

²⁸⁵ Cf. John Pym, *March 17. Master Pym's Speech in Parliament* (1642), E200(37), p. 6: "The Religion of the Papists is a Religion incomputable [*sic*] to any other Religion, destructive to all others, and doth not endure any thing that doth oppose it; and whosoever doth withstand their Religion, (if it lie in their power) they bring them to ruine." See introduction, above, pp. 179–81, for a discussion of the form this standing Protestant charge takes in Milton.

²⁸⁶ Cf. the secular argument of John Locke, who says that such Roman Catholic doctrines as "Dominion is founded in Grace" and "Kings excommunicated forfeit their Crowns and Kingdoms" make it impossible for a non-Catholic state to tolerate the Roman Catholic Church, "for by this means the Magistrate would give way to the settling of a forrein Jurisdiction in his own Country." (*First Letter of Toleration*, 1689, pp. 46–47). See introduction, above, p. 180.

²⁸⁷ See introduction, above, pp. 180–81.

²⁸⁸ Ephesians 4:3.

²⁸⁹ Cf. Brooke, *Discourse* (second ed., 1642), p. 115: "These whom they so brand, may maintaine some errors, may not carry on the truth in the glory of it; who is so pe[r]fect? but oft-times in the midst of thickest ore we finde the purest gold: discover their errors and reject them; but doe not refuse what is good, because they hold it forth but darkly: no truth can shine in its perfect lustre at the first: light is darknesse when it first appeareth."

man slight and contemptible to see to.²⁹⁰ And what doe they tell us vainly of new opinions, when this very opinion of theirs, that none must be heard, but whom they like, is the worst and newest opinion of all others; and is the chief cause why sects and schisms doe so much abound, and true knowledge is kept at distance from us; besides yet a greater [37] danger which is in it. For when God shakes a Kingdome with strong and healthfull commotions to a generall reforming,²⁹¹ 'tis not untrue that many sectaries and false teachers are then busiest in seducing; but yet more true it is, that God then raises to his own work men of rare abilities, and more then common industry not only to look back and revise what hath bin taught heretofore, but to gain further and goe on, some new enlightn'd steps in the discovery of truth.²⁹² For such is the order of Gods enlightning his Church, to dispense and deal out by degrees his beam, so as our earthly eyes may best sustain it. Neither is God appointed and confin'd, where and out of what place these his chosen shall be first heard to speak; for he sees not as man sees, chooses not as man chooses,²⁹³ lest we should devote our selves again to set places, and assemblies, and outward callings of men;²⁹⁴

²⁹⁰ An echo of the criticism Paul recorded of himself (II Corinthians 10:10): "For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."

²⁹¹ Haggai 2:7: "I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts."

²⁹² Cf. Robinson, *Liberty of Conscience*, p. 56: "It is true that if liberty be given for men to teach what they will, there will appeare more false Teachers then ever, yet it were better that many false doctrines were published, especially with a good intention and out of weaknesse only, then that one sound truth should be forcibly smothered or wilfully concealed; and by the incongruities and absurdities which accompany erroneous and unsound doctrines, the truth appears still more glorious, and wins others to the love thereof." See introduction, above, pp. 83-84.

²⁹³ I Corinthians 26:29: "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things which are: that no flesh should glory in his presence."

²⁹⁴ Cf. Walwyn, *Compassionate Samaritane*, pp. 26-28: "The . . . interest of the Divine is to preserve amongst the people the distinction of Clergie & Laity, though not now in those termes. . . . Because otherwise if the people did not believe so, they would examine all that was said, and not take things upon trust from their Ministers . . . : they would then try al things, & what they found

planting our faith one while in the old Convocation house, and another while in the Chappell at Westminster; ²⁹⁵ when all the faith and religion that shall be there canoniz'd, ²⁹⁶ is not sufficient without plain convincement, and the charity of patient instruction to supple the least bruise of conscience, to edifie the meanest Christian, who desires to walk in the Spirit, and not in the letter of human trust, for all the number of voices that can be there made; no though *Harry* the 7. himself there, ²⁹⁷ with all his leige tombs about him, should lend them voices from the dead, to swell their number. And if the men be erroneous who appear to be the leading schismaticks, what witholds us but our sloth, our self-will, and distrust in the right cause, that we doe not give them gentle meetings and gentle dismissions, that we debate not and examin the matter thoroughly with liberall and frequent audience; if not for their sakes, yet for our own? seeing no man who hath tasted learning, but will confesse the many waies of profiting by those who not contented with stale receits are able to manage, and set forth new positions to the world. And were they but as the dust and cinders of our feet, so long as in that notion they may yet serve to polish and brighten the armoury of Truth, ev'n for that respect they were not utterly to be cast away. But if they be of those whom God hath fitted for the speciall use of these times with eminent and ample gifts, and those perhaps neither among the Priests, nor among the Pharisees, and we in the hast of a precipitant zeal shall make no distinction, but resolve to stop their mouths, because we fear they [38] come with new and dangerous opinions, as we commonly forejudge them ere

to be truth, they would imbrace as from God, for God is the authour of truth; what they found to bee otherwise, they would reject. . . . He that bade us to try all things, and hold fast that which was good, did suppose that men have faculties and abilities wherewithall to try all things, or else the counsel had bin given in vaine." See introduction, above, pp. 84-87.

²⁹⁵ Convocation was held in the Chapter-house at Westminster from Wolsey's time through Laud's. The Long Parliament transferred the powers of Convocation (with some augmentation) to the Assembly of Divines, which met in Henry VII's Chapel in Westminster.

²⁹⁶ The Assembly was then working upon, and was expected shortly to report, a Confession of Faith, a Directory of Worship, a Catechism, and a Frame of Church-government; the intention of the Presbyterians was that these should be established and made obligatory by Parliament ("canoniz'd").

²⁹⁷ He was buried in the Chapel in which the Assembly met.

we understand them,* no lesse then woe to us, while thinking thus to defend the Gospel, we are found the persecutors.²⁹⁸

There have bin not a few since the beginning of this Parliament, both of the Presbytery and others who by their unlicenc't books to the contempt of an *Imprimatur* first broke that triple ice clung about our hearts, and taught the people to see day: I hope that none of those were the perswaders to renew upon us this bondage which they themselves have wrought so much good by contemning. But if neither the check that *Moses* gave to young *Joshua*,²⁹⁹ nor the countermand which our Saviour gave to young *John*, who was so ready to prohibit those whom he thought unlicenc't,³⁰⁰ be not enough to admonish our Elders how unacceptable to God their testy mood of prohibiting is, if neither their own remembrance what evill hath abounded in the Church by this lett of licencing, and what good they themselves have begun by transgressing it, be not enough, but that they will perswade, and execute the most *Dominican* part of the Inquisition³⁰¹ over us, and are already with one foot in the stirrup so active at suppressing, it would be no unequall distribution in the first place to suppress the suppressors them-

* Milton would probably have conceded that, despite the sympathy he had now come to feel for the sects, this stricture applied in some measure to himself. As late as the first edition of *Doctrine and Discipline* he was still writing (above, p. 278) of "*Anabaptism, Famelism, Antinomianism, and other fanatick dreams*"; by the time he revised the pamphlet he was beginning to be less certain that everything taught by the extreme sects was necessarily lunacy, and he added the parenthetical comment, "if we understand them not amisse."

²⁹⁸ Cf. John Goodwin's *Theomachia* (1644), which was the substance of two sermons preached after the surrender to the royalists of Essex's army in Cornwall on September 2. The text was Acts 5:38-39, in which Rabbi Gamaliel advises against executing the imprisoned apostles: "Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." Goodwin's subtitle is "The Grand Imprudence of men, running the hazard of *Fighting against God*, in suppressing any Way, Doctrine, or Practice, concerning which they know not certainly whether it be from God, or no." His application is that the military disaster was God's punishment of the Parliamentary party for persecuting the sects. See introduction, above, pp. 112-13.

²⁹⁹ See above, p. 556, n. 245.

³⁰⁰ Luke 9:49-50: "John . . . said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us."

³⁰¹ See above, notes 65, 26 and 63.

selves; whom the change of their condition hath puft up, more then their late experience of harder times hath made wise.³⁰²

And as for regulating the Presse, let no man think to have the honour of advising ye better then your selves have done in that Order publisht next before this,³⁰³ that no book be Printed, unlesse the Printers and the Authors name, or at least the Printers be register'd. Those which otherwise³⁰⁴ come forth, if they be found mischievous and libellous, the fire and the executioner³⁰⁵ will be the timeliest and the most effectuall remedy, that mans prevention can use. For this *authentic* Spanish³⁰⁶ policy of licencing books, if I have said ought, will prove the most unlicenc't book it self within a short while; and was the immediat image of a Star-chamber decree³⁰⁷ to that purpose made in those very times when that Court

³⁰² In March Henry Robinson had written (*Liberty of Conscience*, pp. 31–32): "But what hath been the end of the grand Politicians and Persecuters? may it not be observed, that . . . very many . . . have been taken in their own nets . . . ? *Let such as thinke they stand take heed lest they fall*, and may it be far from any of Gods good servants to imagine that God delivered them out of persecution to the end they might be inabled to persecute their brethren: Persecution is a sinne, a signe of the Church malignant, . . . the whole Kingdome did acknowledge it whilst Popery domineered, the greatest part are weary of it in Prelacie; O let Presbytery be forewarned thereby, and know that they have the same temptation which was common to both the other Governments, and wherein they miscarried." A few weeks before *Areopagitica* appeared he had gone further; *An Answer to Mr. William Prynne's Twelve Questions* (November 1, 1644), E15(5), p. 21, demanded: "if Episcopacie and Presbytery have set the State on fire through an ambitious desire of Empire, together with a pestilent spirit of persecuting one another, may not the serving both alike reduce us to quietnesse againe?" See introduction, above, p. 121.

³⁰³ Actually, the Order next-but-two before this. Milton is quoting from the Order of January 29, 1642. Between it and the Licensing Order there intervened two orders, one of August 26, 1642, and one of March 9, 1643; see introduction, above, pp. 160–61. It seems unlikely that Milton could have been unaware of these orders.

³⁰⁴ There is an ambiguity here. It was a legal offence for books to be published anonymously or without the publisher's imprint, even though they were neither "mischievous" nor libellous; it was another offence to publish "mischief" or libel, even though the publication carried the name of author and publisher.

³⁰⁵ The normal procedure for condemned books was to confiscate the publisher's stocks and "call in" distributed copies, and have the whole imprint burnt by the executioner, who also carried out any corporal punishment ordered for author or printer (*e.g.*, pillory, ear-cropping, nose-slitting, *etc.*).

³⁰⁶ See above, p. 493, n. 26.

³⁰⁷ Decree of July 11, 1637; see introduction, above, pp. 159–60, and above, p. 505, n. 67.

did the rest of those her pious works, for which she is now fall'n ³⁰⁸ from the Starres with *Lucifer*. Whereby ye may guesse what kinde of State prudence, what love of the people, what care of Religion, or good manners there was at the contriving, although with singular hypocrisie it pretended to bind books to their good behaviour. [39] And how it got the upper hand of your precedent Order so well constituted before, if we may beleieve those men whose profession gives them cause to enquire most, it may be doubted there was in it the fraud of some old *patentees* and *monopolizers* in the trade of book-selling; who under pretence of the poor in their Company not to be defrauded, and the just retaining of each man his severall copy, which God forbid should be gainsaid, brought divers glosing colours to the House, which were indeed but colours, and serving to no end except it be to exercise a superiority over their neighbours, men who doe not therefore labour in an honest profession to which learning is indetted, that they should be made other mens vassalls. Another end is thought was aym'd at by some of them in procuring by petition ³⁰⁹ this Order, that having power in their hands, malignant books might the easier scape abroad, as the event shews. But of these *Sophisms* and *Elenchs* ³¹⁰ of marchandize I skill not: This I know, that errors in a good government and in a bad are equally almost incident; for what Magistrate may not be mis-inform'd, and much the sooner, if liberty of Printing be reduc't into the power of a few; but to redresse willingly and speedily what hath bin err'd, and in highest authority to esteem a plain advertisement more then others have done a sumptuous bribe, is a vertue (honour'd Lords and Commons) answerable to Your highest actions, and whereof none can participat but greatest and wisest men.

The End. [40]

³⁰⁸ The Court of Star-Chamber was abolished July 5, 1641.

³⁰⁹ For the Petition, dated April 1643, see introduction, above, pp. 161-62.

³¹⁰ *Sophisms* and *Elenchs*: here, apparently, positive and negative logical deceit. The Stationers are being accused of using sophistical arguments to establish false propositions, and elenchical arguments (in the sense of false refutations) to defend themselves against true charges or sound objections.